

**THE FOLLOWING
OF CHRIST. IN
FOUR BOOKS
WRITTEN BY
JOHN...**

Thomas : von Kempen,
Jean Gerson





Ex Bibliotheca
majori Coll. Rom.
Societ. Jesu

II. 3. 2

215.5.

2
5

2
2
6



W. M.

De
Imitatione Christi Libri
quatuor; ~~opus~~ Joannis
Persen Vercellensis e. h. b.
Ord. S. Benedicti ex de-
cem antiquis Codicibus,
quatuor quorum saltem
ante annos quadringentos
scripti sunt, correpti, et
emendati. Londini, sine
Typographo 1673.

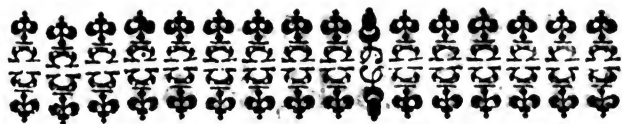
THE
FOLLOWING OF
CHRIST.
IN
FOUR BOOKS
WRITTEN BY
JOHN GERSEN,
ABBOT of VERCELLES,
OF THE HOLY ORDER OF
St. BENEDICT:

Drawn out of Ten Ancient Manuscripts; some written above four hundred years ago, and set forth by the famous Abbot *Cajetan*, Chronologist to *PAUL* the V. and dedicated to Him; and printed at *Rome*, with Approbation, and general Acceptation, 1644.

Printed at London, Anno Dom. 1673.



22.000 1.000



T O

OUR MOST HOLY FATHER,

PAUL the V. Pope;

Don Constantine *Abbot Ca-*
jetane, his Chronologist, wish-
eth everlasting happiness.



He abundance and
multitude (most
Holy Father) of
most eminent men
in all kind of virtue , is so
great and numberless , which
A 2 the

The Epistle Dedicatory.

the Religion of that most holy Father of Monks, St. *Benedict*, hath produced and brought forth; that, it is not in the power of man to number them, but of Almighty God only : *Who alone number's the stars, and calls them by their names.*

And to say truly, if we lift up our eyes from this valley of misery, and sink of death, to behold that blessed country, which is the seat of happiness, and the abode of eternity; we forthwith behold an Army of shining Martyrs, a prais-worthy number of Confessors, a glorious company of Virgins,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Virgin of the great St. *Benedict's* Children, amongst the Quires of those, praising and glorifying God. It is not necessary in this place to particularize. For, To what end is it to use a long discourse of a thing well known to all? And, if I should attempt it, the discourse would never have an end.

Yet if any prudent esteemer of things, weighing the high merits of this Religious Order, should give it that sacred Elogy, *Multa filæ congregaverunt divitias, Tu supergressa es universas*: Many daughters have gathered together riches; Thou hast

The Epistle Dedicatory.

hast surpassed them all; perchance, he should not much erre from the truth. If notwithstanding we have wherein to glory, let us not swerve from the glory of the Apostles (as our *St. Bernard* admonisheth us) wherein there is nothing lofty, nothing vain.

There are truly several families, Religious in Gods Church, wherein every one hath their Prerogatives; yet this praise is proper and peculiar to *St. Benedict's Order*, *To have laboured more than them all.*

We, in this, say nothing that is insolent or unbeseeming religious modesty: we
avouch

The Epistle Dedicatory.

avouch not the merit, but the labour ; let all have equal merit , the same condition ; as well those that came to work the first hour of the day , as those who came at the last ; yet it cannot be denyed but that the Children of St. *Benedict*, who have cultivated the field of the Church more than 1100 years with so great a number of workmen , must have labour'd more than others.

Their labours are not unknown, neither do they stand in need of others testimony ; for, even the numerous Monasteries, and goodly Churches,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

as well in *Italy* as other Countries of the Christian world, erected by our Ancestors, do sufficiently proclaim how much we have, and do yet labour for the salvation of mankind : yea, *our Lord hath sent others to reap what ours have sown.*

But, in truth, we do not so much regard the having furnished the Church, with so many failing and decaying Walls, as we do the having adorn'd it with Works which shall last for ever.

I will say nothing of *Dionysius Exiguus*, *Romanus Arator*, *Ennodius* Bishop of *Pavv*,
and

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and *Anselmus Cassiodorus*; with the Masters and Doctors of the Academies of the Roman Church, *Lateran* and *Vatican*, or *Canton*.

I now omit *Gregory* the Great, *Isidore*, *Ildefonse*, *Bede*, *Damascene*, *Alcuine*, *Raban*, *Hayman*, *Damian*, *Anselm*, *Bruno*, *Signius*, *Rupert*, *Bernard*; and chiefly *Saint Benedict* himself, that great Patriarch and Lawgiver of Monks, replenished with the spirit of all the Saints, and his children the holy Abbots; *Placid*, Protomartyr of his sacred Order, and *Maurus* Confessor, Masters of that heavenly School and godly life. I

The Epistle Dedicatory.

I say nothing now of Saint *Scholastick B. Virgin*, sister to that admirable Father St. *Benedict*, the Foundress, prime Leader and Mother of the Western part of the world: whose soul albeit laden with the heavy burden of the Body, accustomed her self from her infancy, to heavenly Exercises: and, by a strange and unheard-of passage, seized with no corporal infirmity, but all joyful and alive, penetrated the highest heaven in the likeness of a Dove.

And now, lastly, I say nothing (passing over those faintly innumerable male-off-springs
of

The Epistle Dedicatory.

of the great St. *Benedict*) of those Angelical Saints of the Virginal sex, inspired by the *Holy Ghost*, *Elizabeth*, *Hildegard*, *Gertrude*, *Mechtild*, and *Licthgard*; who, like those five holy Virgins in the Gospel, having fill'd their lamps with oyl of all virtues, by word and work enlightned with the fire of the *Holy Ghost*, carrying them in their hands, *went joyfully to meet Christ their Spouse, following the Lamb wheresoever he goes.*

And now I come to him, whose name, though in former times well known, yet now vulgarly almost forgotten,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

ten, though the fame and profit of his writings have penetrated all the Countries and Regions of the world.

I say *John Gersen*, Abbot of our Order, and Author of this most celebrated Book, *Of the Following of Christ*. O good God! how great sanctity doth shine in it! how great a contempt of the world! what a sublimity of heavenly wisdom! how excellent a form and discipline of life!

Now, if you desire authority, it hath most abundant witnesses; two Doctors of the Church, and Lights of the Christian world, the Angelical
St.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

St. Thomas, and the Seraphical *Bonaventure*, made manifestly appear, how much they esteem'd this Book. *St. Thomas* made use of it, for the composing of the office of the blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body, now approved by the Church. *St. Bonaventure* quoted much of it in his Writings. What shall I say of *Pius V.* Pope, your Holiness's Predecessor, and *St. Charles Barome*, Cardinal and Arch-bishop, who carried the Book with them, whithersoever they went. What of *Frederick*, Cardinal and Arch-bishop, the same *St. Charles* his Uncle? who, a true Disciple

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Disciple of *Gersen*, avowed to me, this Book not to have been written with terrene Ink, but the divine of the *Holy Ghost*, and he still kneeling, not sitting.

This is the Book, out of which *Paul* the IV. Pope, and the blessed Fathers *Ignatius Loyola*, and *Philip Nereus*, sucking the rules of Religious life, delivered them to the benefit of all good Christians. And *Thomas a Kempis*, famous also for doctrine and sanctity, did so much covet the heavenly doctrine therein contain'd, that he was not content to read it in anothers hand, but that he
would

The Epistle Dedicatory.

would himself transcribe it. And lastly, *Alexander*, Bishop of *Pavy*, of great sanctity (to omit many others lest I should be too tedious) never suffer'd it out of his hands.

How much therefore, and how highly, must and ought we to esteem this our *John Gersen*, Abbot; to whose discipline so many wise men submitted themselves, though, to speak truly, not to *John*, but rather to the Divinity it self; and, that I may speak more plainly, the *Holy Ghost*, who delights to live in peaceable and pure souls; by this mans mouth, hath laid open to mortal

The Epistle Dedicatory.

tal men, *the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God*. No marvel therefore, if, amongst all People and Nations, there hath been hitherto so great a contest about the Author of this Book, every Nation challenging him to it self; as it happened to *Homer*, as Antiquity relates. And, which is more, the people of all Nations have with one consent so conspired in liking and reverencing this Book, that now a days there is none can be ignorant thereof; for the sound of it (no less than of the Apostolical preaching) hath been heard in all Nations; since it is evident, that

The Epistle Dedicatory.

that the Master of this Christian Philosophy, is now heard to speak to the *Grecians*, *Spaniards*, *French*, *Germanes*, *English*, *Sarmates*, and Others, and (which is more to be admired) among the *Turks*; every one hearing him speak in their own language.

Wherefore it is well to be hoped, that the name of Christ will be propagated; since all Nations accord in the liking and reading *The Imitation of Christ*. And what then remains there, but that we return to the blessed state of the Primitive Church, when there was but one here, and one

The Epistle Dedicatory.

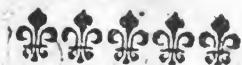
one soul in the same Belief,
which had the beginning from
the conjunction of all tongues.

And to conclude (most
holy Father), I thought good
to put forth this Book, resto-
red to the *true* Author under
your most August name
and protection; and this by
good advice and upon just
reason. For To whom doth
the patronage of truth more
properly belong than to the
Successor of *St. Peter*, whose
Seat was placed upon the *Rock*
of *Truth* which is *Christ him-*
self.

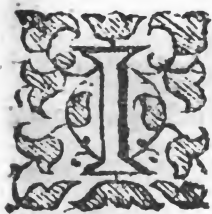
And now I pray you, what
Book can be judged more
worthy

The Epistle Dedicatory.

worthy (the Holy Scriptures only excepted) to be continually in the Pope's hands, and to alleviate his sollicitous care for all mankind, than that which teacheth the *Imitation of Christ*. Our *John Gersen*, Abbot, may therefore most securely appear, warranted by so powerful a Protector, and never fear the glory of his labours henceforth to be detracted. God Almighty conserve your Holiness's health for the benefit of his Church. *From Your Apostolical Palace the third of the Nones of June, A. C. 1616.*



THE PREFACE
TO THE
CHRISTIAN READER,
- Lover of pure Truth.



Here present thee (dear Christian Reader) with the Book commonly known by the name of, The Imitation or Following of Christ, in as simple, pure, and plain English; as I could possibly draw it from it's original Latin-fountain; to the end thou mayst drink with joy, the pure waters flowing out of thy Saviour's Fountain, Esay. I 2.3. who promiseth to give unto him that is thirsty, of the Fountain of the Water

THE PREFACE.

ter of life freely ; that is, as I have here impartially drawn it forth, and delivered it unto thee, without any design of self-interest, or desire thereby to defend that Faith I profess, or to advance and glorify my own particular state, condition, and vocation, as some others surely have done, either by drawing out what they found opposite to their Tenents, or by forcing the Translation to the fancy of their own humor and calling. Both which vices I have endeavoured carefully to avoid, neither adding any thing, nor diminishing; neither forcing the words, nor wresting them; but permitting the text to its true natural, genuine sense, and signification

That it now appears in English, Father'd seemingly upon a new Author, is an ancient approved verity; which whosoever shall question, and contest, may receive full satisfaction from

THE PREFACE.

*from the learned Abbot Cajetan, the Reverend Father Francis Walgrave, and other invincible Champions of this undeniable opinion : and surely, for my own part, I am more clearly ascertain'd of this * Truth*

by the serious consideration of the spirit wherewith this divine Book is written, than by any verbal arguments; (though they are also most evident, and capable to convince any disintrested judgment). For, if ever Son had the air,

* This liberty may be allowed to a Preface, and hindereth not one from abounding in his own sense.

form, feature, countenance, yea the very humor, and spirit of his Ancestors; the Author of this Work had that of his fore father, St. Benedict.

If you ask, What was the spirit of St. Benedict, and consequently that of his true and natural children? The great St. Gregory answereth (He was full of the Spirit of the just) that is.

THE PREFACE.

(Greg. l. 2. Dial. cap. 28.) *that is, be most eminently possessed all the most excellent virtues of all the Saints. And if, descending from generals to particulars, you would know wherein the Benedictine-spirit chiefly consists: It was, and is, Discretion; which is the very Parent, Preserver, and Quintessence of all Virtues: and therefore (as the same great Doctor affirms of the glorious Saint Benedict) He wrote a Rule excelling in discretion, whereby, with St. Paul, becoming All to All, he might gain all to their Creator, 1 Cor. 9. 22.*

And surely the effects of this discreet Spirit have been exceeding wonderful; in that it hath converted almost all Nations to God, so as the Benedictines may justly say, to the major part of Christian People, and particularly to us English, Though you have ten thousand Masters in Christ, yet not many Fathers; for
4 in

THE PREFACE.

In Christ Jesus, by the Gospel, we have begotten you, 1 Cor. 4. 15. in that we first reclaim'd you from idolatrous blindness, to the light of Christianity.

If you desire to know the farther effects of this discreet spirit, as to the practice of Virtue; you need only look upon the multitudes of Saints which it hath sent up to*

Heaven. If you will read it in Books, you may peruse the discreet Rule written by St. Benedict him-

* 557⁰⁰ Canonized Saints of St. Benedict's Order.

self, and (to name some for all, since they, all are numberless) the devout Works of the great Saint Gregory, the mellifluous Writings of St. Bernard, the spiritual conflict of Castaniza, the Ascetick labours of the modern Bloisius, the mystical pieces of our intern contemplative (of later memory) Father Augustin Baker, and the Heart-piercing sentences of this incom-

THE PREFACE.

incomparable Gersen, and you shall find them all to be replenisht with this spirit of the Just, which consists in the teaching, helping on, and advancing all Christians to perfection, in their several Ways, Callings, and Conditions, by a super-eminent manner, method, and efficacy, which is not to other writings so proper and peculiar. Yet this is neither by me spoken, nor is by any one to be understood, as tending to the least underualuing of other approved Orders and Professions, now gloriously flourishing in the Church of God: all which we most sincerely reverence, and most willingly acknowledge them to be eminent, and useful Instruments (according to their particular way and spirit) of promoting the Divine honour and service, of propagating piety, and perfection; and of encouraging their neighbours, and the performance of their religious duties and devotions.

THE PREFACE.

And now to come to the * *The motive of this translation.*
*motive * which occasion'd*
this Translation. I have
formerly written a small Treatise
[entitled, This is the gate of our
Lord, the Just shall enter by it,
Psal. 117. 19.] as a means to discern
and find out, to continue and perse-
vere in the true Faith ; which was
gratefully accepted by those Lovers of
pure Truth, for whom I prepared it :
*I did there engage my * self* * *In the conclusion of that Treatise.*
to give them certain Rules
for the practice of Virtue ;
which is the other Branch
of Christian Duty ; (for a Christi-
an-man's Duty consisteth in Faith
and good Works, James 2. 20, 26.)
But, finding my Obligation to
exceed my Ability, and that the
performance of that Promise was be-
yond my own power ; I conceived it
expedient (both for my discharge and
my Friends satisfaction) to beg the
cha-

THE PREFACE.

charitable assistance of some more able Brother, and to supply my penury out of my Neighbour's more plentiful treasury.

When presently this truly Religious Monk, John Gersen, (whose Profession divesteth him from all propriety in anything whatsoever) signified unto me, That, if his divine Books of the Imitation of Christ (which lay now imprisoned, disguised, and manacled in the English Tongue) were set at liberty (as it was in my power to do it) they might be employ'd to the Glory of God, and the payment of my Debt.

Whereupon, I forthwith embraced his liberal proffer, and made use of his borrowed riches to supply my want, and satisfy my Obligation ; setting him at free and full liberty ; (without any restraint, shackle, or disguise ;) and, permitting him to his natural and genuine scope and course

THE PREFACE.

to the Glory of God, and the Ghostly comfort of all God-thirsty Souls. For I hold my self indebted to all, to the wise and to the unwise, Rom. 1. 14. to the Active and Contemplative, and Mixt ; and I conceive this sacred Book will be suitable to all sorts of Vocations and Dispositions, every one finding here what is proper and expedient for himself, as the Manna, descending from Heaven, Psal. 77. 24. relished with all Appetites.

Here the hungry may be filled, the Thirsty refreshed, the Sick cured, the Weak strengthened, the Strong enabled, the Desolate comforted, those in Darkness inlightned, and the Scrupulous resolved : Here, the Angry may learn to gain Patience, the Patient Tranquility, the Proud, Humility, the Humble, Content, the Lascivious, Chastity, the Chaste, Purity, the Sensualists, Temperance, the Tem-
perate,

THE PREFACE.

perate, Satiety, *the Poor, Riches, the Rich*, increase in Spirit : And, to conclude all, in a word, All is here found. Come unto me (*saith this Book, with our blessed Saviour*) all ye that labour, and are burthened, and I will refresh you, *Mat. 11. 28.*

The Method of this work is very easie and obvious ; for, as it stands divided into Four Books, it aims at Four several Documents.

The First, If we come to Christ, we must forsake ourselves, Mat. 16. 24. The Second, we must take up his Cross. The Third, we must imitate and follow him. The Fourth, that we may eat and drink at his table in his Kingdom, Luke 16. 24. Or thus, (which is all one, and according to the clear Design of the Work.)

The First sheweth how to forsake and abandon our selves and all worldly Vanities.

The

THE PREFACE.

The Second, informeth us, how the Kingdom of God is within us, and declareth the benefit and happiness of intern Conversation.

The Third, giveth us to understand, (or rather to feel) the interior Speech, Allocution, Conversation, and all such like secret Operations and divine impulses of Christ, with and to the Soul.

The Fourth, furnisheth us with the most delicious banquet of Christs sacred Body, whereby our Saviour and the Soul are perfectly united together, to their mutual and unspeakable delight and ravishment.

As to the manner of practice, it may be various, according to the Reader's various disposition, and as every one finds it most correspondent to his own proper grace and propension: And therefore, I shall not here presume to prescribe any set Rules*

*The manner of practice.

THE PREFACE.

Rules of use ; but conceive it absolutely necessary that every one should endeavour, (besides the reading of the Book) to have a discreet Director, who from time to time (or at least once for all, if the Person be capable) may free him from all superfluous Scruples, clear all his Doubts, and resolve all his Difficulties.

I know a certain devout soul which daily made use of this following manner of Morning and Evening Exercise : First, he distinctly read over one Paragraph of the Book (in the order there conched, even from the first to the last, from the beginning to the end) for his spiritual repast and contentment. Secondly, he endeavoured to chew and digest it, according to his Souls present gust, necessity, and disposition. And surely, the Effect was wonderful : for it served him upon all occasions, as a most

THE PREFACE.

most sovereign Antidote against the poison of Vices, as a Buckler against the violence of temptations, as a spur for the practice of all sorts of vertues. This order (I say) he constantly kept and observed throughout the whole Book, and found the effect thereof to be so virtually and invariably the same, that every part and particle wrought alike to his spiritual help, comfort, and advancement. And he hath frequently signified unto me, that none could express what he experienc'd, or understand what he did, or would say; but such only as were habituated in the like practice of Devotion: adding moreover, that though he had continued this pious custome for above twenty years space, yet it seem'd still new to his internal palate, and so he thought it would still be to him, should his Life-pilgrimage be never so long protract-ed. This surely is that best part,
which

THE PREFACE.

which he here chose, and embraced, and which he hoped should never hereafter be taken from him. Luke 10. 42.

There is now no more to be said (Dear Christian Reader, Lover of pure Truth, for my desire is thou shouldst be such an one) but that, having thus discharged my obligation, I remain so well satisfied, as I conceive it needless to put pen to paper any more in this kind : and (were it not a presumption to use those divine expressions) I could with willing Heart and Soul breathe forth that saying of good old Simeon, Now dismiss thy servant (O Lord) according to thy Word, in peace, for mine eyes have beheld thy salvation, Luke 2. 42.

God give unto thee (Dear Christian Reader) and to us all, the Blessing of the Dew of Heaven, Gen. 28. 28. that is, the fulness of his Grace, that

THE PREFACE.

*that it may be with us, and work
with us, in this Life, true perfection,
according to these Books ; and, in
the next, fulness of happiness in his
ever-satiating Glory. Amen.*

JESUS MARIA BENEDICTUS.



THE
FIRST BOOK
OF THE
IMITATION
OF
CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

Of the Imitation of Christ, and contempt of all worldly vanities.

I. **H**E that followeth me walketh not in darkness, saith the Lord, *Joh. 8. 12.*

These are the words of Christ by which we are admonished that
B we

we must imitate His life, and manners; if we will be *truely illuminated*, and be freed from all blindness of heart.

Let it be therefore our chiefest care to meditate on the life of J E-
S U S.

2. T H E doctrine of Christ excels all the doctrines of the Saints; and he who hath His spirit, will find therein hidden Manna.

But it falls out that many feel but small devotion by often hearing of the Gospel, because they have not the *spirit of Christ*.

But he that would fully, and feelingly understand the words of *Christ*, must endeavour to conform his whole life to *His*.

3. W H A T will it profit thee to dispute learnedly of the *Trinity*, if for want of humility thou displease the *Trinity*? Surely,

Surely, High words make not a man just or holy, but a virtuous life makes him dear to God, 1 Cor. 13.

I had rather feel what Contrition is, than know the Definition of it.

If thou didst understand the whole Bible, and the sayings of all the Philosophers, What would it profit thee, without *grace*, and the *love of God*?

Vanity of vanities, and all is *vanity*, but to love God, and serve him only, Eccl. 1.

This is the highest wisdom, To tend to the Kingdom of heaven by the contempt of the world.

4. IT is *vanity* therefore to seek after fading Riches, and to trust in them.

It is also *vanity* to gape after honors, and to climb to an high state.

It is *vanity* to follow the desires of the flesh, and to desire that for

B 2

which

which thou must be afterward grievously punished.

It is *vanity* to hope, or wish for long-life, and to care little to live well.

It is *vanity* to heed only this present life, and to have no consideration of those things that are to come.

It is *vanity* to love that which with all speed passeth away, and not to hasten where there is everlasting joy.

5. REMEMBER often that Proverb, that *The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing,* Eccle. i. 8.

Study therefore to withdraw thy mind from the love of visible things, and turn thy self to invisible things: for, those who follow their sensuality, stain their conscience, and lose the *Grace of God*.

CHAP. II.

Of the humble esteems of our Selves.

1. **E**VERY man naturally desires to know ; but what avails knowledg without the fear of God ? *Eccl. 1.*

Truly, an humble Husbandman that serveth God, is better than a proud Philosopher, who, neglecting himself, contemplates the course of the heavens.

He that knows himself well, is contemptible to himself, and delights not in the praises of men.

If I should know all things in the world, and were not in charity ; What would that help me in the sight of God ? Who will judg me according to my deeds.

2. **Q**UIET thy self from the busie
B 3 desire

desire of Knowing ; for , therein is found much distraction, and deceit.

1 Cor. 8.

The learned would willingly seem such to others , and be esteemed wise.

There are many things the knowledg wherof do very little profit the soul ; and, he is very unwise who attends to other things than what may serve to his salvation.

Many words do not satisfie the soul ; but, a good life comforts the mind , and a pure conscience gives great confidence in God.

3. THE more and better thou knowest, the more grievously shalt thou be judged, unless thy life be also more holy.

Wherefore, Desire not to be praised for any Act, or Knowledg, but rather fear for the knowledg given thee.

But,

But, if thou think thou knowest much, and understandest very well; yet know, There be many more things which thou understandest not.

Seek not to know things above thy reach, but rather confess thy ignorance, Rom. 12.

Why wilt thou preferre thy self before any one, seeing there are many more learned, and skilful in the Law than thy self.

If thou wilt know, and learn any thing profitably, love to be unknown, and to be esteemed as nothing.

4. THIS is the most high, and profitable lesson; Truly to know, and despise, Our-selves.

It is great wisdom and perfection, To esteem nothing of a mans Self, and to think alwayes well and commendably of Others.

B 4

IF

If thou shouldest see any man openly sin, or commit any grievous offence; yet oughtest thou, not to esteem the better of thy self, because thou knowest not how long thou mayst be able to remain in a good state.

We are all frail; but thou shouldst esteem none more frail than thy self.

CHAP. III.

Of the Doctrine of Truth.

1. **H**APPY is he whom *Truth* by it self teacheth, not by figures and passing words, but as it is in it self. *Psal. 93.*

Our opinion, and our sense do's often deceive us, and sees but little, *Eccles. 3.*

What avails earnest cavilling, about

about dark and hidden things, since we shall not be reprehended in judgment for not knowing them?

It is great folly to neglect profitable things, and things necessary; and so, freely give our minds to those which are curious and hurtful.

Having eyes, we see not. Psa. 113.

2. WHAT have we to do with *Genus* and *Species*, (terms of Logicians)?

He to whom the *Eternal Word* speaketh is free from multiplicity of opinions.

From one word, all; and all speak *One*; and this is the *Beginning which speaks also to us*: without it, no man understandeth, or judgeth rightly. Jo. 8. 25.

He to whom all things are *One*; and who draws all things to *One*, and who sees all things in *One*; may

be stable in heart, and remain *peaceable in God*.

O, Truly God, make me one with thee in perpetual love.

It is tedious to me oftentimes to read, and hear many things.

In Thee, is all that I will, or desire.

Let all Doctors hold their peace; let all creatures be silent in thy sight: Speak thou to me, alone.

3. THE more a man is united to himself, and inwardly *simplified*, the more and higher things doth he understand without labour; because he receives *light* of understanding from above, *Matt. 11*.

A pure, simple, and stable spirit, is not distracted by many affairs, because he doth them all to the honour of God; and being quiet in himself, endeavours to be free from all self-seeking. *Luk. 10*.

Who

Who hinders and troubles thee, more than thy unmortified affection of heart?

A good and devout man doth dispose his works inwardly, which he is to do outwardly; neither do they draw him to the desires of vicious inclinations, but he squares them to the judgment of right reason.

Who hath a stronger combat than he that strives to overcome himself?

And this should be our business, (*viz*), To overcome our selves, and daily to become more powerful over our selves, and grow still better.

4. AL perfection in this life is mixed with some imperfection, and all knowledg with some ignorance.

The humble knowledg of Thy-Self, is a more assured way to *God*, than a deep search after Learning.

Learn

Learning is not to be blamed, nor the meer knowledg of a thing; which, in it self, is good, and ordained by *God*: but a good Conscience, and a virtuous Life is always to be preferred before it.

But, because many desire rather to know much, than live well; therefore they often erre, and reap none, or but small, profit.

5. O, if men would bestow as much labour in rooting out of vices, and planting virtues, as they do in moving of questions! there would not be so great evils committed, nor so great scandals among the people, nor so much looseness in *Monasteries*.

Truly at the day of Judgment, we shall not be examined, What we have read, but what we have done: nor, How well we have learned, but how religiously we have lived,
Matt. 25. Tell

Tell me, Where are now all those Masters, with whom thou wert so well acquainted whilst they lived and flourished in learning? Now, others possess their livings, and I know not whether they ever think of them : In their life, they seemed something, but now they are not spoken of.

6. O how soon doth the glory of this world pass away? Would to God, their lives had been answerable to their knowledg, then had their study, and reading been to good purpose, *Eccl. 2.*

How many perish in this world by vain learning, who little care for the service of *God? Tit. 2.*

And, because they choose rather to be great than humble, therefore they vanish away in their own imaginations, *Rom. 1.*

He is truly great, who greatly
loves

loves God. *Matt. 18. & 23.*

He is truly great, who is little in his own eyes; and makes no account of all height of honour.

He is truly wise, who esteems all earthly things as dung; *that he may gain Christ, Phil. 3.*

For, He is truly learned, who doth the will of God, and forsakes his own.

CHAP. IV.

Of Prudence in our actions.

I. **W**E must not give credit to every word, or suggestion; but leisurely and warily weigh the thing according to God.

But alas! such is our weakness, that commonly we sooner believe, and speak evil than good of others.

I *John 4.*

But, Perfect men do not easily
give

give credit to every thing, that is told them; because they know humane infirmity to be very prone to evil, and slippery enough in words, *Jam. 3. Gen. 8.*

2. IT is great wisdom not to be rash in our doings, nor to stand stiffly in our own opinions; as also, not to believe every mans words, nor presently to tell to others, what thou hast heard, and believed, *Prov. 19. 17. Job. 17.*

Consult with a wise, and conscientious man, and seek to be instructed by a better, rather than to follow thine own inventions. *Eccius. 19. Prov. 12. 15.*

A good life makes a man wise according to God, and skilful in many things, *Ecclus. 2.*

The more humble a man is in himself, and more subject to God, so much more prudent shall he be in all things, and more at peace. CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the reading of holy Scriptures.

I. **T**RUTH; not Eloquence, is to be sought for, in holy Scriptures.

All holy Scripture ought to be read with the same Spirit wherewith it was written. *Rom. 15.*

We must rather search for profit in Scriptures, than subtilty of speech. *2 Cor. 2.*

We should as willingly read devout, and simple books, as high and learned.

Let not the authority of the Writer offend thee, whether he be learned, or not; but let the *love of pure Truth*, lead thee to read.

Enquire not *who* spake, but mark *what* is spoken.

2. MEN

2. MEN pass away, but *the Truth of our Lord remaineth for ever.* Psal. 16, *Luke* 22.

God speaks divers wayes unto us without respect of persons.

Our own curiosity often hinders us in reading of the Scriptures, whilst we will understand, and discuss that which should simply be passed over, *Rom.* 2. 10.

If thou wilt reap profit, read humbly, simply, and faithfully: nor at any time desire to be esteemed learned.

Enquire willingly after, and hear with silence the words of holy men: and let not the parables of the Elders displease thee, for they are not spoken without cause.

CHAP

CHAP. VI.

Of Inordinate Affections.

1. **W**HENSOEVER, a man desires any thing inordinately, he is presently disquieted in himself.

The proud, and covetous are never at rest; the poor and humble in spirit, live together in all *peace*.

The man who is not perfectly dead to himself, is soon tempted, and overcome in small, and trifling things.

He who is weak in *spirit*, and in a manner yet carnal, and inclined to sensible things, can hardly withdraw himself wholly from earthly desires: and therefore he is often afflicted when he withdraws himself from them, and easily falls into indignation, if any resist him.

2 AND

2. AND if he hath followed his appetite, he is presently grieved through remorse of conscience, by reason he hath given way to his passion, which conduced nothing to the *peace* he sought for.

True *peace* therefore of heart is obtained by resisting passions, not by yielding to them.

There is no *peace* therefore in the heart of a carnal man, nor in a man addicted to outward things ; but, in a fervent *spiritual* man.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying Pride, and vain Hope.

1. **H**E is vain, who puts his trust in man, or in creatures.
Jer. 17. 1.

Be not ashamed to serve others
for

for the *love of JESUS Christ*, nor to be esteemed poor in this world.

Presume not upon thy self, but put thy trust in *God*, *Psal.* 30..

Do what thou canst, and *God* will assist thy good-will..

Trust not in thine own knowledg, nor in the craft of any man living; but rather in the *grace of God*, who helps the humble, and humbles those who presume of themselves.

2. GLORY not in wealth if thou have it; nor in friends, because they are powerful; but in *God*, who giveth all things, and above all desires to give himself.

Boast not of the stature or beauty of thy body, which is disfigured and broken by a small sickness.

Please not thy self in thy ability, or wit, lest thou displease *God*, to whom

whom appertains all the good which naturally thou hast.

3. THINK not thy self better than others, lest perhaps in the sight of *God*, who knows what is in man, thou be accounted worse, *Exod.* 3. 12.

Be not proud of thy good works, for the judgment of *God* and men are different.

That often offends *Him* which pleaseth men.

If thou hast any good in thee, believe better of others, that so thou mayst keep humility.

It is no harm to thee to esteem thy self worse than any man, but it is very hurtful to thee to preferre thy self before any one.

The humble enjoy perpetual peace, but in the heart of the proud is envy and frequent indignation.



CHAP. VIII.

Of shunning too much familiarity.

I. **O**PEN not thy heart to every man, but treat thy affairs with him that is wise, and fears *God*.
Eccl. 8.

Keep company but seldom with young folks, and strangers.

Flatter not the rich, nor do thou willingly appear before great persons.

Keep company with the humble, simple, devout, and virtuous, and talk with them of those things which may make thee better.

Be not familiar with any woman, but commend all good women in general to *God*.

Desire only to be familiar with *God* and his Angels, and fly the familiarity of men.

2. WE

2. WE must *love* all, but familiarity is not expedient.

It falls out sometimes that the fame of a person makes him esteemed, whose presence is not pleasing to the eyes of the beholders.

We think sometimes to please others by our company, and many times it falls out that we rather disgust them through the evil behaviour they see in us.

CHAP. IX.

Of Obedience, and Subjection.

1. **I**T is a very great matter to remain in obedience, to live under a Prelate, and not to be at our own disposing.

It is much safer to live in the state of Subjection, than of Prelacy.
Many

Many live under obedience rather out of necessity, than for the *love of God*: and such are in pain, and easily murmur, neither can they attain to freedom of mind, unless they submit themselves with all their hearts for *Gods sake*.

Run here and there; thou shalt find no rest, unless in humble subjection under the government of a Prelate.

The imagination and change of places have deceived many.

2. TRUE it is, that every one willingly doth that which suites best to his own sense and liking, and is inclined most to such as are of his own mind: but if *God* be amongst us, we must leave our own judgment sometimes, for the preservation of *peace*.

Who is so wise that he can fully know all things?

Trust

Trust not therefore too much to thine own judgment; but, be willing to hear the opinions of others.

If that which thou thinkest be good, and notwithstanding thou forsakest it for *God*, to follow another, thou shalt more profit thereby; *For I have often heard, that, It is more secure to hear, and take advice, than to give it.*

It may also happen that each ones opinion is good; but, not to yield to another when reason or cause requires, is a sign of wilfulness, and pride.

CHAP. X

Of avoiding superfluity of words.

1. **F**LY the tumult of men, as much as thou canst; for all discourse of worldly affairs is a
Great

great hinderance to piety, though spoken with a *simple* intention. *Matt.* 4. 14.

For we are quickly defiled and enthralled with vanity. *Job.* 6.

I wish I had often held my peace, and not been in company.

But why do we so willingly speak and talk with one another, when notwithstanding we seldom return to silence, without harm of conscience? The reason is, we seek to comfort our selves by mutual discourse, and desire to ease our minds wearied with divers thoughts.

And we very willingly talk, and think of such things as we most love, or desire, or of those that we dislike, *Matt.* 12. *Luke* 6. *Acts* 1.

2. BUT alas! oftentimes in vain, and to no purpose; for, this outward comfort is the cause of no small loss of *inward*, and divine consolation.

We

We must therefore watch, and pray, lest the time pass away in idleness.

If it be fit, and expedient to speak, let it be that which may edifice.

Evil custom, and neglect of our advancement in goodness, is a great cause of inconsiderate speech. *Rom.* 15.

Notwithstanding, devout discourses do not a little further our spiritual progress, especially where persons of one mind, and spirit, are gathered together in God.

CHAP. XI.

Of obtaining peace, and zeal of profiting.

1. **W**E might enjoy much peace, if we would not busie our selves with what others say.

C 2

and

and do; and with that which doth not at all belong unto us.

How can he remain long in *peace* who thrusts himself into the affairs of others? who seeks occasions without, and seldom and little recollects himself interiorly?

2. BLESSED are the *simple*, for they shall enjoy much *peace*. *Mat. 5.*

What was the reason why some of the *Saints* were so perfect and contemplative?

Because they strove to mortify themselves wholly from all earthly desires, and therefore they could with the force of their whole affection cleave unto *God*, and freely attend to themselves.

We are too much busied with our own passions, and too solicitous after things which soon pass away.

We seldom also overcome any one vice perfectly, nor are inflamed

to daily profiting, and therefore we remain cold and tepid.

3. IF we were perfectly dead to our selves, and not intangled within; then we might taste also divine things, and have some experience of heavenly contemplation.

The whole, and grēatest hindrance, is because we are not free from our passions, and desires; neither do we endeavour to walk in the perfect way of the Saints.

Also when any small adversity happens, we are soon cast down, and seek after humane comfort.

4. IF we would endeavour like stout men to stand in the battel, we should surely find the help of *God* from heaven.

For, He who gives us occasions to fight, that we may overcome, is ready to help those that fight manfully,

C. 3. and

and trust in His *grace*.

If we esteem our progress in Religion to lye in the observation of outward things, our devotion will soon be at an end.

Let us then lay the Axe to the root of the tree, that being freed from passions we may enjoy a quiet mind.

5. IF every year we could root out one vice, we should soon become perfect men.

But now oftentimes we perceive it goes contrary with us, and that we were better, and more pure in the beginning of our conversion, than after many years of our profession.

Our zeal, and profit, should daily encrease:

But now it is counted a great matter if a man can but retain some part of his first spirit.

IF

If we should use but a little violence in the beginning, then all things afterwards might be done with ease, and joy.

6. IT is grievous to leave off a custome, but much more grievous to go against our own will.

But if thou dost not overcome small and easie things, when wilt thou overcome harder things?

Resist thy inclination in the beginning, and break off evil custom; lest perchance by little and little it draw thee to greater difficulty.

O, if thou didst but consider how much *peace* thou shouldest cause to thy self, and joy to others, by behaving thy self well; I suppose thou wouldst more earnestly seek thy spiritual profit!

CHAP. XII.

Of the profit of Adversity.

1. **I**T is good for us that sometimes we have adversities, and contradictions ; because, it makes a man enter into himself, that he may know himself to be in banishment, and not trust in any thing in the world. *Tob. 2.*

It is good for us that we be sometimes contradicted, and that we be thought evil and imperfect, though we do, and intend well.

These things do often further humility, and defend us from vain-glory.

For, then do we better seek God for our *inward* witness, when outwardly we are despised by men, and little credit is given to us.

2. A man should therefore so wholly settle himself in God, that he may not need to seek many humane comforts.

When a man of *good-will* is troubled, or tempted, or afflicted with evil thoughts; then he understands what need he hath of *God*, without Whom he perceives he can do no good.

Then also doth he grieve, lament, and pray, by reason of the evils which he suffers.

Then is he weary of living longer, and wisheth that death would come, *that he might be dissolved, and be with Christ, Phil. 1.*

Then also, he well perceives, that perfect security, and full *peace* cannot be had in this world.

CHAP. XIII.

Of resisting Temptations.

1. **A**S long as we live in this world, we cannot be without tribulation, and temptation; and therefore it is written in *Job*, *The life of man is a temptation upon earth*, *Job. 7.*

Every one therefore ought to be careful about his temptations, and watchful in prayer, lest the Devil, who never sleeps (*but goes about seeking whom he may devour*) deceive him. *1 Pet. 5.*

No man is so perfect and holy, but sometimes he hath temptations, and we cannot be wholly free from them.

2. TEMPTATIONS notwithstanding are often profitable unto
man,

man, though they be troublesome, and grievous; for, by them man is humbled, purged, and instructed.

All the *Saints* have passed through, and profited by many tribulations and temptations. *Acts*

14.

And those who could not bear their temptations, became reprobate and fell from *God*.

There is no Order so holy, nor Place so secret, where there are no temptations, and adversities.

3. **THERE** is no man, whilst he lives, wholly secure from temptations; for, the root of temptations is in us, seeing we are born in concupiscence.

One temptation going away, another comes; and we have always somewhat to suffer, having lost our sovereign felicity.

Many by seeking to fly temptations

tions, fall more grievously into them.

We cannot overcome by flight only; but, through *patience*, and *true humility*, we become stronger than our enemies.

4. HE who shuns them only outwardly, and pulls them not up by the roots, - will profit little; yea, he shall the sooner be tempted again, and find himself worse than before.

By little and little with *patience*, and *longanimity* thou shalt (by *Gods* help) better overcome, than by violence, and thine own importunity.

Take counsel often in temptations, and deal not roughly with him that is tempted; but give him comfort, as thou wouldst wish to thy self.

5. THE beginning of all evil
temp-

temptations is inconstancy of mind, and want of confidence in *God*.

For, As a ship without a stern, is tossed to and fro, by the waves; so, the man that is negligent, and quits his resolution, is many wayes tempted.

Fire tries iron, and temptation tries a just man, Ecclus. 32.

We know not many times what we can do; but, temptations shew what we are.

We must be watchful, especially in the beginning of a Temptation; for, then is the enemy more easily vanquished, if he be not suffered to enter the door of the heart, but be resisted at the threshold, at his first knock.

Whereupon one said, *Resist the beginning; after, remedies come too late, Ecclus. 32.*

For, first a simple thought comes into the mind, then a strong imagination,

gination, afterwards delectation, and evil motion, and consent; and so by little and little the wicked enemy gets full entrance, being not resisted at the first.

And how much the longer as a man is negligent in resisting; the weaker doth he become daily, and the enemy more powerful against him.

6. SOME suffer greater temptations in the beginning of their conversion, and some in the end; some again, are much troubled all their life-time.

Some are but lightly tempted, according to the wisdom and equity of the divine ordination; which weighs the states, and merits of men, and pre-ordains all for the salvation of his elect.

WE must not therefore despair
when

when we are tempted ; but pray more fervently to *God*, that he will vouchsafe to help us in all tribulations : who , no doubt , according to the saying of *St. Paul*, will make *with the temptation such issue, that we may be able to sustain it, 1 Cor. 10.*

Let us therefore *humble our selves under the mighty hand of God*, in all tribulation, and temptation ; for, *He will save, and exalt the humble in spirit, 2 Pet. 9.*

7. IN temptations & tribulations, a man is proved ; how much he hath profited, and his merit is the greater, and his virtue more apparent.

Neither is it much, if a man be devout , and fervent when he feels no difficulty : but if, in time of adversity, he demean himself patiently, there is hope of great profit.

Many are preserved from great temptations, who in lesser are daily

ly overcome, that, being humbled, they may never presume of themselves in great matters, who are so weak in small occasions.

CHAP. XIV.

Of avoiding rash judgment.

I. **T**URN thine eyes upon thy self, and take heed of judging the actions of others.

In judging others man labours in vain, often errs, and easily sins. *Mat. 7. Rom. 2.*

But in judging and examining himself, he alwayes labours profitably. *Eccl. 3.*

As we affect a thing, so do we often judg of it; for private love easily robs us of true judgment.

If God were alwayes the pure intention of our desire, we should not be

so easily troubled for the resistance of our own opinion.

2. BUT some secret inward inclination, or outward affection doth often concur, which also draws us after it.

Many secretly seek themselves in the things which they do, and know it not.

They seem also to live in good *peace* of mind, when things are done according to their will, & judgment:

But if they be done otherwise than they desire, they are soon moved, and grow sad.

The diversities of judgments, and opinions, are many times the cause of dissentions amongst friends, and Citizens, amongst religious and devout persons. *Matt. 10. Luke 12.*

3. A N old custom is hardly broken, and no man is led willingly
fur-

further than himself likes.

If thou rely more upon thine own reason and industry, than upon the *subjective* virtue to JESUS *Christ*, thou shalt rarely, and hardly be an illuminated man; for, *God* will have us perfectly subject to him, and to *transcend* all reason through inflamed love. *Jer.* 13.

CHAP. XV.

Of Works done for the love of God.

I. **F**OR no worldly thing, nor for the love of any man whatsoever, is the least evil to be committed.

Yet for the good of one that wants it, a good work may be omitted, or changed into a better; for, by this the good work is not lost, but changed into a better. *Mat.*

18.

With-

Without the *love of God*, the outward work profits nothing.

But whatsoever is done for the *love of God*, be it never so little, & contemptible, is made wholly profitable; for God weighs the affection more than the action. *1 Cor. 13.*

2. HE doth much, that *loves* much.

He doth much, that doth a thing well.

He doth well, who rather serves the community, than his own will.

That seems oftentimes to be *charity*, which is rather carnality. *Luk. 7.*

For, the inclination of the flesh, self-will, hope of reward, desire of commodity, will seldom be wanting. *Phil. 2.*

3. HE who *loves God truly* and perfectly, seeks not himself in any thing,

thing, but in all things desires only the glory of God. *1 Cor. 13.*

He envies no man, because he loves no private joy; neither will he rejoyce in himself, but above all good wisheth to enjoy God.

He attributes nothing that is good to any man, but refers it wholly to God: from Whom, as from a fountain, all things proceed; and in Whom, as in their end, all the Saints joyfully rest.

O! he that had but one spark of true charity, would certainly perceive all earthly things to be full of vanity!

CHAP. XVI.

Of bearing with the defects of others.

- I. **W**HAT a man cannot mend in himself, or in others, he

he ought to bear patiently, till *God* ordain otherwise.

Think, that perhaps it is better so for thy tryal, and patience, without which our merits are not much to be weighed. *Mat. 6. Luk. 11.*

When notwithstanding thou hast such hinderances, thou must pray that *God* would vouchsafe to assist thee, and enable thee to bear them well.

2. IF any one being once, or twice admonished, do not yield; contend not with him, but commit all to *God*, that his will may be done, and he honoured in all his servants, who knows how to turn evil into good. *Matt. 6. 1 Thes. 3.*

Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, whatsoever they be; since thou thy self hast many things which others must bear withall.

IF

If thou canst not make thy self as thou wouldst, How canst thou expect to have another according to thy liking?

We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we mend not our own faults.

3. WE would have others to be strictly corrected, and will not be corrected our selves.

The large liberty of others displeaseth us, and yet we will not be denied what we desire.

We would have others to be restrained by Laws, but in no sort will we suffer our selves to be so.

By this it appears how seldom we love our neighbours as our selves.

If all were perfect, What should we have to suffer from others for God?

4. BUT now *God* hath so ordained,

dained, that we learn to bear one anothers burthens; for, there is no man without defect, no man without burthen, no man sufficient for himself, no man wise enough for himself. *Luke 8. Gal. 6.*

We ought therefore to bear with one another, to comfort, help, instruct, and admonish one another.

Every ones virtue is best discovered by occasion of adversity; for, occasions do not make a man frail, but shew what he is.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Monastical Life.

1. **T**HOU must learn to break thy will in many things, if thou wilt live in peace and concord with others. *Gal. 6.*

It is no small matter to dwell in
Mona-

Monasteries, or in Congregations, and there to converse without complaint, and to persevere faithful till death.

Blessed is he who hath lived well, and died happily there. *Luke 8.*

If thou wilt be stedfast, and advance well in piety; esteem thy self as a banished man, and a Pilgrim on earth.

Thou must be made a fool for Christ, if thou wilt lead a religious life.

2. The Habit, and the Tonsure, contribute little; but the change of manners, and the intire mortification of the passions, make a true Religious man. *1 Pet. 2.*

He that seeks any thing but purely God, and the good of his soul, shall find nothing but trouble and sorrow.

He cannot long remain in peace,
who

who doth not endeavour to be the least, and subject to all.

3. THOU didst come to serve, not to rule; know thou art called to suffer, and labour, and not to be idle and prate.

Here, men are tried as gold in the furnace. *Matt.* 20.

Here, no man can be stedfast, unless he humble himself with all his heart, for the *love of God.* *Wisd.* 3.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Examples of the holy Fathers.

1. **B**EHOLD the lively Examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection, and Religion, shined; and thou shalt see how little, and almost nothing that is which we do. *Heb.* 11.

D

Alas!

Alas ! What is our life, compared to others ?

The Saints, and Friends of *Christ* served our Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labour and weariness, in watchings and fastings, in prayers and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproaches.

2. O, How many and grievous tribulations did the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and all the rest, who desired to follow the steps of *Christ*, suffer !

For, They hated their lives in this world, that they might possess them in everlasting life. John. 12. Mat. 17.

O, How strict and abandoned lives did the holy Fathers live in the Wilderness ! O, how long and grievous temptations did they suffer ! How frequently were they vexed by the enemy ! How continual and fervent

fervent prayers did they offer to *God* ! what rigorous abstinencies did they undergo ! how great zeal and fervour had they of their *spiritual profit* ! what strong war did they wage for the conquest of vice ! how pure and upright was their intention to *God* ! All the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to continual *prayer* ; though, in labouring, they ceased not from *Mental prayer*.

3. THEY spent all their time profitably ; every hour seem'd short to them to attend to *God* ; and, through the great sweetness of *contemplation*, they forgot the necessity of feeding their bodies.

They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends and kindred.

They desired nothing belonging to the world. *Matt. 19.*

They scarce took what was necessary

cessary to the preservation of life.

They were troubled to serve their bodies even in necessity.

They were, therefore, poor in earthly things; but very rich in *Grace*, and virtues.

Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly they were filled with *grace* and *divine comfort*.

4. **THEY** were strangers to the world, but near, and familiar friends to *God*. *James 4.*

They seemed to themselves as nothing, and were by this world despised; but, they were precious and beloved in the sight of *God*.

They were grounded in *true humility*, lived in simple obedience, and walked in charity and patience.

They therefore profited daily in *spirit*, and obtained great favour with *God*.

They

They are given for an example to all Religious persons.

And they should more stirr us up to spiritual fervour, than the number of the cold, and negligent Religious, to looseness.

5. O, How great was the fervor of all Religious, in their first Institution! O, how great devotion to *prayer*! how great emulation of virtue! how exact discipline flourished! how great reverence, and obedience under the rule of a Master, was in all things observed!

Their footsteps yet remaining testify that they were truly perfect, and holy men; who, fighting so valiantly, trod the world under their feet.

Now he is much accounted of, who transgresseth not his Rule, who can patiently endure what he hath professed.

6. O the coldness, and negligence of our state, that we so soon decline from our first fervor! and now through sloth, and stupidity we are weary of our lives.

Would to God the desire of advancement in virtue were not wholly asleep in thee, who hast often beheld so many examples of devout persons!

CHAPTER XIX.

Of the Exercises of a good Religious man.

I. **T**HE life of a good religious man ought to excel in all virtues, that he may *inwardly* be such, as outwardly he seems to men to be. *Matt. 5.*

And, according to reason, he ought to

to be much more *inwardly* than outwardly appears: for the beholder of our hearts is *God*; Whom we ought most highly to reverence wheresoever we are, and walk as Angels, *pure* in his sight. *Psal.* 132. *Heb.* 4.

We must every day renew our resolution, and excite our selves to fervour, as if this were the first day of our conversion, and say, *Assist me O Lord in my good purpose*, and in thy holy service: and grant unto me this day, that I may perfectly begin; for it is nothing that I have hitherto done. *Psal.* 15.

2. ACCORDING to our resolution shall be the success of our profit, and much diligence is necessary for him that will profit much.

For if *he* often fails who makes a strong resolution; What will he do who seldom, or less stedfastly, resolves upon any thing?

The not-performing our purpose happens many ways; and the leight omission of our Exercises, seldom passeth without some loss.

The purpose of just men depends rather on the *grace of God*, than their own wisdom, in Whom they always confide whatever they undertake.

For, *Man purposeth, and God disposeth; neither is the way of man in his own hands*, Prov. 16.

3. IF for piety's sake, or intention of doing good to our brother, we sometimes omit our accustomed Exercise; it may easily be recovered afterwards:

But if, through tediousness of mind, or negligence, it be leightly left off; it is worthy of blame, and will prove hurtful.

Let us endeavour what we can; yet we shall fail in many things, Ecclus. 7. Some-

Something certain notwithstanding is always to be purposed, especially against that which most hinders us.

Our outward and *inward* behaviour ought also to be examined, and ordered; because, both are necessary to our advancement.

4. IF thou canst not always recollect thy self, yet do it sometimes, at least once a day; to wit, either in the Morning, or Evening.

In the Morning resolve, in the Evening examine, the performance, how thou hast that day behaved thy self in *thought, word, and deed*; for, in these, perhaps, thou hast offended *God*, and thy *Neighbour*.

Dent. 4.

Bestirr thy self like a Man, against all the wickedness of the Devil.

Bridle Gluttony, and thou shalt

the more easily curb all other inclinations of the flesh.

Be never altogether idle, but be either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or doing something profitable for the common good.

Bodily exercises notwithstanding are to be discreetly used, and not equally to be undertaken by all.

5. THOSE things which are not common are not to be exposed to publick view : for private things are more safely done in secret.

Yet, art thou to take heed, that thou be not slack to Common exercises, and more forward to Private.

But having faithfully, and fully performed, what thou art bound to do, and is enjoined thee; if thou hast more leisure, return to thy self as thy devotion shall move thee.

All cannot have the self-same exercise;

ercise; but one is more proper for this, another for that.

Moreover, according to the time, and occasion, divers exercises are more pleasing: for, some relish better upon working days, other upon holy-days.

Some are necessary in time of temptation, others in time of peace and tranquillity.

Some we willingly think on, when we are sad; and others, when we are joyful in our Lord.

6. UPON principal Holy-days our good exercises are to be renewed, and the suffrages of the Saints to be more fervently implored.

From feast, to feast we must resolve with our selves, as if we were then to depart out of this world, and come to the eternal Feasts in the next.

And therefore we ought to prepare

pare our selves carefully at Holy-times; and to live more devoutly, and keep all Observances more exactly; as if we were shortly to receive the reward of our labour from God.

7. AND, if it be deferred, Let us believe our selves not well prepared, and unworthy as yet of that great glory, which shall be revealed in us at the appointed time: and, in the mean time, let us endeavour to prepare our selves better, for our Departure. *Rom. 8.*

Blessed is the Servant (says Saint Luke the Evangelist) whom, when his Lord shall come, he shall find watching. Amen, I say unto you, He shall place him over all his possessions, Luke 12. Matt. 14.

CHAP. XX.

Of the love of Solitude and Silence.

1. **S**EEK out a fit time to attend to thy Self, and often call to mind the benefits of *God*.

Leave Curiosities.

Read such things as cause compunction, rather than such as fill the head with notions. *Ecclus. I.*

If thou withdraw thy self from superfluous talk, and idle wandering abroad, and from hearing of news, and tales; thou shalt find time sufficient, and fit, to exercise thy self in good meditations.

The greatest Saints avoided the company of men, as much as they could; and chose to live in secret, with *God. Heb. I.*

2. *I returned less man* (said one)

as

as often as I was amongst men : this we often find when we talk long : It is easier, To keep silence altogether, than, Not to exceed in words. *Senec. Epist. 7.*

It is easier, To stay at home, than, To demean ones self well abroad.

Whosoever therefore pretends to attain to *internal* and *spiritual* things, ought to withdraw himself with *JESUS* from the multitude.

No man goes safely abroad, but he who willingly stays at home.

No man securely speaks, but he who willingly holds his peace.

No man securely governs, but he who delights to live in subjection.

No man securely commands, but he who hath learned well to obey.

3. No man securely rejoyceth, unless he have within him the testimony of a good conscience.

Yet, the security of the Saints was

was always full of the fear of God.

Neither were they less carefull and humble in themselves, though they shined with *grace* and great virtues.

But the security of evil men rises from pride and presumption, which in the end deceives them.

Never promise thy self security in this life, though thou think thy self to be a good Monk, or a devout Hermit.

4. OFTEN-times, those who are better in the judgment of men, are in greater danger by reason of their too much confidence.

It is more profitable to many therefore, Not to be altogether free from temptations, but, To be often assaulted, lest they should be too secure, and so, perhaps, be puffed up with pride, or give themselves too freely to outward comforts.

O how good a conscience should he keep, who would never seek after transitory joy, nor busie himself with the things of this world !

O how great *peace* and *quietness* should he possess, who would cut off all vain cares, and only think of divine things, and such as conduce to the good of his soul ; and place all his hope in GOD !

5. No man is worthy of heavenly comfort, who doth not diligently exercise himself in holy Compunction.

If thou desirest true Contrition of heart, enter into thy Closet, and shut out the tumults of the world, as it is written, *Be contrite in your closets*, Psal. 4.

Thou shalt find in thy Cell, what thou shalt often lose abroad.

Thy Cell, if thou continue in it, grows sweet ; and, if thou love not
to

to stay in it, becomes tedious.

If, in the beginning of thy Conversion, thou dost cultivate, and keep it well; it will be afterwards a dear friend, and a most delightful comfort to thee.

6. IN silence and *quiet*, the devout soul reaps profit, and learns the secrets of holy Scriptures.

There she finds floods of tears, wherein she may every night wash, and cleanse her self; that she may become so much the more familiar with her Maker, by how much the farther she lives from all worldly tumults. *Psal. 6.*

For, *God* with his holy Angels will draw near to him, who withdraws himself from his acquaintance, and friends.

It is better for a man to lye hid, and take care of himself; than, neglecting himself, to do Miracles.

It

It is commendable for a Religious man to keep his Cell ; and go seldom abroad ; and, to avoid seeing, or being seen by men.

7. WHY wilt thou see that which thou oughtest not to have ?

The world passeth away and the desires of it, 1 Joh. 2.

Our sensuality draws us to rove abroad, but when the hour is past, What carry we back, but a burthened conscience, and distracted mind ?

A joyful going abroad oftentimes causeth a sorrowful coming home ; and a merry Evening makes a sad Morning.

So, All carnal joy hath a pleasant entrance ; but, in the end, it bites and destroys us.

What canst thou see elsewhere, which thou seest not here ? behold here heaven, and earth, and all the elements ; for, of these all things are made.

WHAT

8. **WHAT** canst thou see any where under the Sun that can continue long?

Thou thinkest perhaps to be satisfied, but thou canst never be so.

If thou couldst see all things that are, what were it but a vain sight.

Eccel. 1.

Lift up thine eyes to *God* on high, and ask pardon for thy sins, and negligences. *Eccel. 3. Psal. 122.*

Leave vain things to the vain, and do thou attend to those things which *God* hath commanded thee.

Shut the door upon thee, and call unto *JESUS* thy beloved.

Remain with *Him* in thy Cell, for thou shalt not find so great peace any where else.

If thou hadst not gone abroad, nor hearkened to idle stories, thou hadst continued in good peace.

But, because thou art sometimes delighted

delighted with hearing news, thou must needs suffer trouble of mind.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Compunction of heart.

1. **I**F thou wilt profit any thing, *Keep thy self in the fear of God; Prov. 19.* And be not too free, but awe all thy senses with the curb of discipline; and give not thy self to foolish mirth.

Give thy self to Compunction of heart, and thou shalt find devotion.

Compunction gains much good, which Dissolution is wont quickly to destroy.

'Tis wonderful that a man who weighs and considers his banishment, and so many dangers of his soul, can heartily rejoyce at any time in this life!

2. THROUGH

2. THROUGH levity of heart, and neglect of our defects, we feel not the sorrows of our soul; but, many times, we vainly laugh, when we have just cause to weep.

There is no *true liberty*, nor *good mirth*, but in the *fear of God*, with a *good conscience*.

Happy is he who can cast off all occasion of distraction, and recollect himself to the union of holy compunction.

Happy is he who can deny himself whatsoever may defile, or burthen his conscience.

Fight manfully: One custom overcomes another.

If thou canst forbear to intermeddle with other men, they will not hinder thee in that which thou hast to do.

3. *Busy not thy self with other
mens*

mens matters, nor intangle thy self with the affairs of thy betters.

Have alwayes in the first place an eye to thy Self; and especially admonish thy self, before, or above any whom thou lovest best.

Be not grieved if thou hast not the favour of men, but take this to heart, that thou dost not carry thy self so well, and circumspectly, as becomes a servant of *God*, and a devout religious man to converse.

It is oftentimes better, and more secure for a man, not to have many consolations; especially, such as are according to the flesh.

Yet, that we have not divine comforts, or feel them seldom, is our own fault: because we labour not for compunction of heart, nor cast off vain and outward comforts, altogether. *Psal. 76.*

4. ACKNOWLEDG thy self unworthy

worthy of divine consolation, and rather deserving great tribulation.

When a man is perfectly compunct, then all the world is bitter, and troublesome to him.

A good man always finds sufficient cause of mourning, and weeping.

For, whether he considers himself, or weighs the state of his neighbour, he perceives, that none live here without tribulation.

And the more throughly he considers himself, the more he grieves.

Our sins and vices, wherein we are so plunged, that we can seldom contemplate heavenly things, afford us matter of just sorrow, and interior compunction.

5. IF thou didst oftner think of thy Death, than of Long-life, no doubt but thou wouldst be more fervent to amend thy self. *Ecclus. 7.*

Also

Also, if thou didst cordially consider the pains of Hell, and of Purgatory; I believe, thou wouldst willingly endure any labour and pain, and not fear any kind of austerity. *Matt. 25.*

But, because those things pierce not the heart, and we still love what delights us; therefore, we remain cold, and very slothful.

It is oftentimes want of *spirit*, that makes the miserable body so quickly complain.

Pray therefore humbly to our *Lord*, that *he* may give thee the spirit of compunction, and say with the Prophet. *Feed me, ô Lord, with the bread of tears, and give me to drin^k of tears, in measure. Psal. 79.*

CHAP. XXII.

*Of the consideration of Humane Mi-
sery.*

MISERABLE thou art
wheresoever thou art, and
whithersoever thou turnest thy self;
unless thou turn thy self to *God*.

Why art thou troubled because
all things answer not thy will and
desire?

Who is he that hath all things ac-
cording to his will? Neither I, nor
thou, nor any man upon earth.

No man, living in this world, is
without some tribulation or afflicti-
on; be he King, or Pope. *Eccl. 6.*

Who is he that is best at ease?
Surely, he that for *God* can suffer af-
fliction.

2. **MANY** weak and frail men
E say.

say, O how fine a life such a man lives, how rich, how great, how powerful, how mighty is he? *Luc.*

12.

But lift up thine eyes to heavenly riches, and thou shalt see, that all these temporal things are nothing; and that they are very uncertain, and very burthensome, being never posselt without care, and fear.

The happiness of a man consists not in having abundance of temporal things, but a mean sufficeth him.

Job. 14. Prov. 1.

Truly, 'tis a misery, to live upon earth.

The more a man desires to be *spiritual*, the more bitter is this present life to him; because he perceives better, and sees more clearly the defects of humane corruption.

For, To eat, drink, watch, sleep, rest, labour, and to be subject to
all

all other necessities of nature, is truly a great misery, and affliction to a devout man; who would willingly be freed and delivered from all sin.

3. FOR, The *inward* man is very much oppressed with the necessities of the body in this world.

Whereupon the Prophet devoutly prays, that he might be freed from those necessities, saying, *Deliver me, ô Lord, from my necessities*, Psal. 24.

But, Wo be to them that know not their own misery, and more wo to them that love this miserable and corruptible life.

For, Some there be that embrace it so closely (though with labouring, and begging, they scarce get necessaries,) that, if they could live here always, they would not care at all for the Kingdom of God.

4. O senseless people, and Infidels in heart, who lye buried so deep in earthly things, that they understand nothing but carnal things !

But (miserable that they are !) in the end they shall find to their cost, that, what they loved, was vile, and a meer *Nothing*.

Whereas the Saints of *God*, and all the devout friends of *Christ*, looked not on those things which pleased the flesh, and flourished for a time ; but with all their hope and intention panted after eternal blessings. *I Pet. I. Heb. II.*

Their whole desire aspired upwards to things everlasting and invisible, that the love of visible things might not draw them downwards to things here below.

O Brother, lose not thy confidence of going forward in *spirituality* ; there is yet time, the hour is not

not yet past. *Rom. 13. Heb. 10.*

5. WHY wilt thou deferr thy resolution from day to day?

Arise, begin this very *instant*, and say, *Now is the time to do, Now is the time to fight, Now is a fit time to amend,* 2 Cor. 6.

When thou art ill at ease, and much troubled; then is the time to merit.

Thou must pass through fire and water, before thou canst come to refreshment. Psal. 65.

Unless thou use violence to thy self, thou shalt not overcome Vice.

As long as we carry about us this frail body, we cannot be without sin, nor live without tediousness, and grief. *Rom. 3.*

We would fain be quiet, and freed from all misery; but, because through sin we have lost Innocency,

therefore we have lost true Happiness. *Gen. 3. 8.*

Therefore it behooves us to have patience, and to expect the mercy of God, till this iniquity *pass away, and mortality be swallowed up by life.*

6. O how great is human frailty, which is always inclined to evil!

To day thou confessest thy sins, to morrow thou dost commit them again. *2 Macc. 9.*

Thou now resolvest to take heed; and an hour after, thou dost as if thou hadst made no resolution at all.

■ We may therefore justly humble our selves, and never have any great conceit of our selves, since we are so frail, and inconstant.

That may also soon be lost by negligence, which with much labour is hardly gained again by *grace.*

7. WHAT

7. WHAT will become of us in the end, who so *soon* begin to grow cold?

Wo to us, if we thus decline to rest, as if it were peace & security; when there doth not as yet appear the marks of true sanctity in our conversation.

We have great need to be newly instructed again, like good Novices, to good manners; if perhaps there may be any hope of future amendment, and greater spiritual progress.

CH A P. XXIII.

Of the Meditation of Death.

1. **D**EATH will soon come upon thee: look therefore what condition thou art in. *Job. 9. Eccl. 14. Luk. 12. Heb. 9.*

E 4

To

To day a man, to morrow none ;
and, Out of sight, out of mind.

O stupidity and hardness of mans heart, who thinks only of the present, and provides not for the future!

Thou shouldst so order thy self in all thy thoughts, and actions, as if this day, or presently, thou wert to dye. *Matt. 23.*

If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldst not much fear death. *Luk. 12.*

It is better to avoid sin, than to flye death. *Wisd. 4.*

If thou art not prepared to-day, How wilt thou be to-morrow?

To-morrow is uncertain, and how knowest thou whether thou shalt live to see it, or no? *Mat. 24. & 25.*

2. WHAT avails it to live long, since we amend so little?

Ah!

Ah! Long-life doth not always mend us, but often encreaseth our fault.

Would to God we had spent one day well in this world!

Many reckon the years of their conversion; but the fruit of amendment is often but small.

If it be dreadful to die, it will be, perhaps, more dangerous to live longer.

Blessed is he, who hath always the hour of death before his eyes, and disposeth himself daily to die. Eccius. 7.

If at any time thou hast seen a man die, consider that thou must pass the same way.

3. In the morning, conceive thou maist not live till night; and when night comes, do not dare to promise thy self the next morning.

Be therefore alwayes ready; and

live, that death may never come upon thee unawares.

Many die suddenly, and when they little think of it.

For, *In the hour we least imagin, the Son of man will come. Matt. 24. Luke 21.*

When that last hour shall come, thou wilt begin to have another opinion of thy whole life past, and be exceeding sorry, that thou hast been so remiss and negligent.

4. How wise, and happy is he, who endeavours to be such in his life, as he wisheth to be found at his death!

For, The perfect contempt of the world, fervent desire to profit in virtue, love of discipline, labour of penance, ready obedience, forsaking our selves, and bearing all adversity patiently for the love of JESUS; will give great confidence of dying happily.

Many

Many good things thou maist do whilst thou art well ; but, when thou art sick, I know not what thou canst do.

Few are amended by sickness ; and those also who go much abroad, seldom become sanctified persons.

Trust not in thy friends and neighbours, nor deferre the health of thy soul to future times ; for, men will sooner forget thee than thou dost imagin. *Esay 30. & 31. Jer. 17. & 48.*

It is better to provide now in time, and do some good before hand, than to rely on the help of others.

If thou beest not careful of thy Self now, who will be carefull for thee when thou art gone ?

Time now is very precious, *1 Cor. 6.* But alas ! that thou dost not spend it more profitably , by which thou mayest merit to live for ever.

The

The time will come when thou shalt desire one day or hour to mend in; and, I know not whether it will be granted thee.

6. O most dearly beloved! From how great danger mayst thou free thy self, from how great fear deliver thy self; if thou wouldst now be alwayes fearful and expecting death?

Endeavour to live in such a manner here, that thou mayst rather rejoyce, than fear in the hour of death.

Learn now to die to the world, that then thou mayst begin to live with Christ. *Rom. 5.*

Learn now to despise all things, that thou mayst then freely go to Christ. *Luke 14.*

Chastize thy body now by penance, that Then thou mayst have assured confidence. *1 Cor. 9.*

7. AH!

7. *AH fool! Why dost thou think to live long, when thou art not sure of one day? Luk. 12.*

How many are deceived, and unexpectedly snatched out of this body?

How often hast thou heard related, that such a one was slain with a sword, another drowned, another falling from on high broke his neck; this man, with eating was choked; that man, in playing got his end: Another by fire, another by weapon, another by plague, another murdered by thieves.

Thus death is the end of all, and the life of man passeth as a shadow.

8. *WHO will remember thee when thou art dead? or who will pray for thee? Job. 14.*

Do now (most dearly beloved) whatever thou canst do, because
thou

thou knowest not when thou shalt die, and art ignorant what shall befall thee after death.

Whilst thou hast time, heap up to thy self immortal riches. *Mut. 6. Luke 12. Gal. 6.*

Think of nothing but thy salvation; attend only to what belongs to *God*.

Make now thy self friends by honouring the Saints of *God*, and imitating their lives : *that, when thou failest in this life, they may receive thee into eternal habitations.* *Luk. 16. Heb. 1.*

9. KEEP thy self as a Pilgrim and a Stranger here upon earth : to whom the affairs of the world do nothing belong. *1 Pet. 2.*

Keep thy heart free and elevated to *God*, because thou hast here no abiding City. *Heb. 13.*

Send thither thy daily prayers,
and

and sighs with tears; that thy soul may deserve happily after death, to pass to our *Lord. Amen.*

CHAP. XXIV.

Of Judgment, and the Punishment of sins.

I. **I**N all things look unto thy end, and consider how thou shalt stand before a severe Judg, to Whom nothing is hid; Who takes no bribes, nor receives excuses; *but, what is just he will judg.*

O most miserable and foolish sinner, who sometimes art afraid of the very look of an angry man, what wilt thou answer to *God*, who knows all thy wickedness? *Heb. 9. Luke 16.*

Why dost thou not provide for thy self against the Day of Judgment

them for future punishment.

We truly deceive our selves through the inordinate love which we bear to our flesh.

3. WHAT other thing shall that fire devour but thy sins? The more thou sparest thy self now, and followest the desires of the flesh; the more heavily shalt thou suffer hereafter, and a greater fuel shall be added to the flame.

In what sins a man hath sinned, in those shall he be more grievously punished.

There the slothful shall be pricked forward with burning goads; the gluttonous tormented with extreme hunger, and thirst: there the luxurious, and lovers of pleasures shall be covered with burning pitch, and stinking brimstone; and the envious like mad-dogs shall howl for grief.

4. THERE

4. THERE shall be no vice which shall not have its peculiar and proper punishment.

There, the proud shall be filled with confusion, and the covetous punished with miserable want.

There, one hour of suffering will be more painful than an hundred years of most sharp penance in this world.

There, is no rest, nor comfort for the damned.

Here, there is sometimes intermission of labour, and we enjoy the comfort of our friends. *Job. 4. 41.*

Be now sollicitous, and sorrowful for thy sins, that in the day of Judgment thou mayst be secure with the blessed.

For, then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that afflicted and oppressed them. Wis. 5.

Then, shall he stand to judg, who
now

now humbly submits himself to the judgment of men.

Then, the poor and humble shall have great confidence; and the proud, fear on every side.

5. THEN, it will appear that he was wise in this world, who had learned for *Christ's* sake to be a fool, and despised.

Then, all tribulation patiently suffered, will delight us; *and all iniquity stop her mouth*, Psal. 106.

Then, shall the devout rejoyce, and the prophane mourn. 2 *Cor.* 4.

Then, mortified flesh shall more exult, than if it had always been pamper'd with delights.

Then, shall the poor garment shine, and the precious robe become sullied.

Then, shall the poor Cottage be more commended than the rich Palace.

Then,

Then, constant patience shall more avail us, than all the power in the world.

6. THEN, simple obedience will be preferred, before all worldly craft.

Then, shall a good and pure Conscience cause more joy, than learned Philosophy.

Then, shall the contempt of riches weigh more than all worldly treasures.

Then, wilt thou be more comforted, that thou hast prayed devoutly, than that thou hast fared daintily : then, wilt thou more rejoyce that thou hast been silent, than that thou hast talked much : Then, will thy holy works be of greater value, than many fair words.

Then, will a strict life, and hard penance, be more pleasing than all earthly delights.

Learn

Learn now to suffer a little, that thou mayest then be delivered from more grievous pains.

Prove first here, what thou art able to do hereafter.

If thou canst now endure little, how wilt thou be able to suffer eternal torments? if now so little suffering make thee impatient, what will hell fire do hereafter?

Verily, thou canst not have two Paradises; thou canst not glut thy self with delights in this world, and afterwards reign with *Christ*.

7. IF thou hadst lived always till this day, in honours and pleasures, what would it avail thee if it happen that thou shouldst now instantly die? *Luke 11.*

All is vanity, therefore, but to love God, and to serve him only. Eccles. 1.

For, whosoever loves God with his

his whole heart is not afraid of death, or punishment, or judgment, or hell, since *perfect love* gives secure access to *God*. *Rom. 8.*

But 'tis no marvail, if he who is delighted with Sin, be afraid of Death, and Judgment.

Yet it is good (if love cannot reclaim thee from sin) that the fear of hell at least may restrain thee.

But he who lays aside the fear of *God*, cannot continue long in good state, but will quickly fall into the snares of the Devil.

CHAP. XXV.

*Of the present Amendment of our
whole life.*

1. **B**E watchful and diligent in the service of *God*, and consider often with thy self, to what end

and thou camest, and why thou didst leave the world. *1 Tim. 4.*

Was it not that thou mightest live to God, and become a spiritual man?

Be fervent therefore to profit; for, thou shalt shortly receive the reward of thy labours; *and then there shall be no more fear or grief in thy coasts. Matt. 5.*

Thou shalt labour here a while, and thou shalt reap great Rest, yea, and perpetual joy. *Ecclus. 51. Apoc. 21. & 22.*

If thou dost continue faithful, and fervent in working, God without doubt will be faithful and bountiful in rewarding.

Thou oughtst to have a good hope of getting the victory; but must not be in security of it, lest thou grow negligent, or proud.

2. WHEN a certain man being
anxious

anxious, and often wavering between hope and fear, on a time oppressed with grief, had prostrated himself in *prayer* before the Altar, he revolved thus in his mind, saying : O, if I knew that I should yet persevere ! And he presently heard interiorly the divine answer : What if thou didst know it, what wouldst thou do ? Do now what thou wouldst then do, and thou shalt be happy, and secure : and presently being comforted and strengthened, he committed himself to the *Divine Will*, and the anxious wavering ceased, and he had no mind curiously to search further what might befall him, but rather studied to discover *the perfect and acceptable will of God*, for the beginning and perfecting every good work. *Rom. 5.*

3. HOPE in our Lord, and do
good,

good (saith the Prophet); dwell in the land, and thou shalt be fed with the riches thereof, Psal. 36.

One thing there is which deterreth many from the progress in virtue, and the diligent amendment of their lives, (to wit) the dread of difficulties, and the labour of the combat.

But truly they, above all others, profit most in virtue, who most stoutly endeavour to overcome those things which are most grievous, and contrary to them.

For, there a man profits more, and merits greater *grace*, where he most overcomes himself, and mortifies himself in *spirit*.

4. BUT all men have not alike to overcome, and mortify: yet he that is zealous to advance in virtue, will profit more, though he have more passions to overcome, than

F another

another that hath fewer passions, and less fervour to virtue.

Two things especially conduce much to amendment (to wit) To withdraw our selves violently from that to which Nature is viciously inclined, and to labour fervently for that good we have most need of.

Endeavour also to avoid and overcome with great diligence, those things in thy self, which do most displease thee in others.

5 MAKE thy profit on all occasions; so as if thou dost hear or see any good examples, stir up thy self to imitation thereof:

But if thou seest any thing worthy of reproof, take heed thou commit not the same; or, if thou at any time hast done it, labour presently to amend it.

As thine eye observes others, so art thou also noted again by others.

Matth. 7.

O

O how sweet and pleasant a thing it is, To see brethren fervent and devout, well-manner'd and disciplined ! 1 *Cor.* 12.

On the contrary, how grievous and pitiful to see disorderly livers, who practise not the things to which they are called !

How hurtful is it to neglect the purpose of our vocation, and busy our selves in things that belong not to us !

6. BE mindful of the resolution thou hast made, and put before thine eyes the Image of the *Crucifix*.

Thou mayst well be ashamed, beholding the life of *JESUS Christ*, seeing thou hast not as yet more earnestly endeavoured to conform thy self to Him, though thou hast been a long time in the way of the service of *God*.

A Religious man who exercises

self seriously and devoutly in the most holy life and passion of our *Lord*, shall there abundantly find whatsoever is necessary and profitable for him; neither need he seek for any thing better out of *JESUS*.

O if *JESUS* crucified did but come into our hearts, how sufficiently learned should we be in a short time !

7. A fervent religious man takes and bears all things well that are commanded him.

A cold and negligent religious person hath tribulation upon tribulation, and is on all sides afflicted, because he wants inward comfort, and is forbidden to seek any without.

A. Religious, not living in discipline, is in great danger of the ruin of his soul.

Whoſcever ſeeks for liberty and
ease,

ease, shall alwayes live in disquiet; for one thing or other will always displease him.

8. How do so many other Religious; who live under the strict rule of Monastical discipline?

They seldom go abroad, live retiredly, feed very meanly, labour much, speak little, watch long, rise early, spend much time in *prayer*, read often, and keep themselves in all kind of discipline.

Consider the Carthusians and Cistercians, and the Monks and Nuns of divers Orders, how they rise every night to sing praises to *God*; and therefore it would be very unseemly, that thou shouldst be slothful in so holy a work, where so great a multitude of Religious begin to praise *God* in all gladness of heart.

9. O that we had nothing else to do, but with our whole heart and mouth to praise our *Lord God*!

O that thou didst never need to eat or drink, or sleep; but couldst alwayes praise *God*, and imploy thy self only in spiritual exercises! thou shouldst then be more happy than now, whilst through such like necessities thou servest the body.

Would to *God* these necessities were not at all, but only the spiritual refectiōns of the soul, which alas we taste too seldom.

10. WHEN a man comes to this point, that he seeks his comfort from no creature, then doth he begin first to relish *God* perfectly, then will he also be well content with all events.

Then will he neither rejoyce in great matters, nor be sorrowful in small;

small; but wholly, and confidently commit himself to *God*, who is unto him *All in All*, to whom also nothing perisheth or dies, but all things live unto *him*, and serve *him* at a beck, without delay. *Rom.* 11. & 1. *I Cor.* 8. 12. & 15.

11. BE alwayes mindful of thy end, and how lost time never returns.

Without care and diligence thou shalt never gain virtues. *Eccl.* 7. *Apoc.* 3.

If thou begin to wax cold, it will go ill with thee; but if thou give thy self to fervour of *spirit*, thou shalt find great *peace*, and through the *grace of God*, and love of virtue, wilt feel less labour.

A fervent and diligent man is ready for all things.

It is a harder task to resist vices, and passions, than to toyl in bodily labours.

He that shuns not small faulss, by little and little runs into greater.

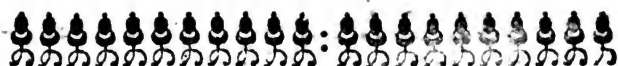
Thou wilt always rejoyce in the Evening, if thou spend the day well. *Eccl. 19.*

Be watchful over thy self, stir up thy self, admonish thy self, and whatsoever becomes of others, neglect not thy self. *Matt. 11.*

The greater violence thou usest against thy self, the more shalt thou profit. *Amen.*

The End of the First Book.

THE.



THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
IMITATION
OF
CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

Of Internal Conversation.

I. **T**HE Kingdom of God is
within you, saith our
Lord, Luke 7.

Convert thy self with thy whole
heart unto the Lord: Leave this
F 5 misera-

miserable world, and thy soul shall find *rest*. *Joel*. 2.

Learn to contemn outward things, and give thy self to *inward* things, and thou shalt perceive the Kingdom of *God* to come into thee.

For the Kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy-Ghost, *Rom*. 14. which is not given to the ungodly.

Christ will come unto thee, and shew thee *His* comfort, if thou prepare *him* a worthy mansion within thee.

All his glory and beauty is within, and there he plealeth himself. *Psal*. 44.

He often visits the *internal* man, and hath pleasing discourses, delightful consolations, much peace, and much-to-be-admired familiarity with him.

2. Go to, faithful soul! Prepare thy

thy heart for thy *Spouse*, that He may vouchsafe to come to thee, and dwell in thee; for so he saith, *If any one love me, he will keep my word; and we will come to him and make our abode with him, Joh. 14.*

Give place to *Christ* therefore, and deny entrance to all others.

When thou hast *Christ*, thou art rich; and he will suffice thee.

He will provide for thee, and be thy faithful assistant in all things, so that thou needest not trust to any. *Joh. 4.*

For, Men are quickly changed, and decay suddenly; but *Christ* remains for ever, and stands firmly to the end.

3. THERE is no great trust to be put in a mortal man, though he be advantageous and dear to thee; neither must thou be sad, if he sometimes cross and contradict thee. *Jer. 17.* Those

Those, who to day are with thee, to morrow may be against thee; so, on the contrary side, they often change like the wind.

Put thy whole trust in GOD, and let *him* be thy Fear, and thy Love: *He* will answer for thee, and do all that is best. 1 *Pet.* 5.

Thou hast not here a permanent City, & wheresoever thou art, thou art a stranger and pilgrim, nor shalt thou ever have *Rest*, unless thou be intimately united to *Christ*. *Heb.* 13. *Phil.* 5.

4. WHY dost thou gaze about here, since this is not the place of thy *Rest*?

In heaven must be thy dwelling, and all earthly things are to be regarded as in a passage.

All things pass away, and thou together with them, *Wisd.* 5.

Beware thou cleave not to them,
left

lest thou be inthrall'd by them, and perish.

Let thy thought be upon the Most-High, and thy prayer directed to *Christ* without intermission.

If thou canst not contemplate high and heavenly things, rest on the Passion of *Christ*, and dwell willingly in *his* most sacred wounds.

For, if thou flye devoutly to the wounds and precious marks of *JESUS*, thou shalt feel great comfort in tribulation : neither wilt thou much care for the contempts of men, and wilt easily bear the words of slanderous tongues.

5. *CHRIST* also was despised in the world by men, and in great necessities, and forsaken by *his* acquaintants and friends, in the midst of slanders and scorns. *Matt.* 12.26. *Job.* 1.5.

Christ would suffer, and be despised :

spised ; and, dar'st thou complain of any one ?

Christ had adversaries, and back-biters, and wouldst thou have all men to be thy friends and benefactors ?

How shall thy patience be crowned, if no adversity happen to thee ?

How wilt thou be the friend of *Christ*, if thou wilt endure no contradictions ?

Suffer with *Christ*, and for *Christ*, if thou wilt reign with *Christ*.

6. IF thou hadst once perfectly entered into the *interiour* of *JESUS*, and felt a little of his burning love ; then thou wouldst not care at all for thine own conveniences, or inconveniences, but wouldst rejoyce at affronts offered thee.

For, The *love* of *JESUS* makes a man despise himself.

A

A *Lover* of *JESUS*, and of *Truth*, and a true internal man; and free from inordinate affections; can freely turn himself to *God*, and lift himself above himself in *spirit*; and, in-joying *Him*, rest in peace.

7. HE that favours all things as they are (not as they are said, and esteemed to be) is truly wise, and rather taught by *God* than Men.

He who knows how to guide himself from *within*, and little values outward things; seeks not for places, nor waits for times, for performing of devout exercises. *Essay* 64.

An internal man soon recollects himself, because he never pours out himself wholly upon outward things.

He is not hindered by exterior labour, or necessary business for a time; but, as things fall out, so he frames himself to them.

He

He that is well ordered and disposed within, heeds not the strange and perverse carriages of men.

The more a man draws things to himself, the more is he hindered and distracted.

8. IF all were right with thee, and thou wert thoroughly purged, all things would fall out for thy good and profit.

Many things often trouble, and displease thee; because thou art not perfectly dead to thy self, nor free from affection to all earthly things.

Nothing so defiles and entangles the heart of man, as impure *love* to creatures.

If thou refuse outward comforts, thou wilt be able to contemplate heavenly things, and often rejoyce inwardly.

CHAP. II.

Of humble submission under the government of a Prelate.

I. **R**EGARD not much who is with thee, nor who is against thee; but let this be thy business and care, to procure that *God* may be with thee in all thou dost, and that thou mayst keep a good conscience: and then, *God* will sufficiently defend thee: For, whom *God* will help, no man's malice can hurt. *Rom.* 8. *I Cor.* 4. *Psal.* 27.

If thou canst suffer, and hold thy peace, without doubt thou shalt see that our *Lord* will help thee.

He knows the time and manner how to deliver thee, thou must therefore resign thy self unto him.

It belongs to *God* to help, and free from all confusion.

It

It doth sometimes much conduce towards the conservation of humility, that others know, and reprehend our faults. *James 3.*

2. WHEN a man humbles himself for his faults, he easily pacifieth others, and soon asswageth their anger against him. *Job. 3.*

God protects and delivers the *humble*, *he* loves and comforts the *humble*, *he* inclines to the *humble* man : to the *humble*, *he* imparts great *grace*, and after his depression *he* raiseth him to glory. *Matth.*

II.

To the humble he reveals his secrets; and draws, and invites him sweetly to Himself.

The *humble* man receiving contumely and confusion is in great *peace*, because he relies on *God*, not on the world.

Do not conceive thou hast profited

fited any thing, unless thou esteem thy self inferiour to all.

CH A P. III.

Of a Peaceable man.

I. **P**UT thy self first in *peace*, and then thou mayst pacify others.

A Peaceable man doth more good, than one that is very learned.

A Passionate man turns good into evil, and easily believes the worst.

A good Peaceable man turns all things to good.

He that is truly in *peace* is not suspicious of any; but he that is discontented and troubled, is tossed with divers suspicions: neither is he quiet in himself, nor suffers others to be quiet. 1 Cor. 13.

He

He saith often that which he should not, and omits that which is more expedient for him to do.

He considers what others are bound to do; and neglects what he is bound to do himself. *Matt. 17.*

Acts 1.

Have therefore in the first place a careful zeal over thy self, and then thou mayst justly be zealous of thy neighbour.

2. THOU knowest well enough, how to excuse and colour thy own deeds, and wilt not receive the excuses of others. *Gal. 6.*

It were more just that thou didst accuse thy Self, and excuse thy Brother.

If thou wilt be born withal, bear also with another. *1 Cor. 13.*

Lo, how far thou art yet from true *charity* and *humility*, which knows not how to disdain or be angry

angry with any but himself.

It is no great matter to converse with good and mild people; for, this naturally pleaseth all, and every one would willingly have *peace*, and do love those best that agree with them.

But to be able to live peaceably with the harsh and perverse, or disorderly, or such as contradict us; is a great *grace*, and very commendable, and a manly deed.

3. SOME there be who keep themselves in *peace*, and have *peace* also with others.

And there are some who are neither at *peace* in themselves, nor suffer others to be in *peace*: they are troublesome to others, but always more troublesome to themselves.

And some there be who keep themselves in *peace*, and labour to bring others to *peace*.

But

But all our *peace* in this life consists more in humble suffering, than in not feeling adversities.

He who knows best how to suffer, will enjoy most *peace* : such an one is a conquerour of himself, and a Lord of the world ; a Friend of Christ, and Heir of heaven.

CHAP. IV.

Of a pure Mind, and simple Intention.

I. **W**ITH two wings man is lifted up above earthly things, with *simplicity* and *purity*.

Simplicity must be in the Intention, and *Purity* in the Affection.

Simplicity intends *God* ; *Purity* apprehends, and tastes *him*.

No good action will hinder thee, if thou be free from inordinate affections. If

If thou intend and seek no other thing, but the good pleasure of *God*, and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt enjoy internal liberty.

If thy heart were right, then every creature would be to thee, a looking-glass of life, and a book of holy doctrine.

There is no creature so small and abject, that represents not the goodness of *God. Rom. 1.*

2. IF thou wert good and *pure* within, then wouldst thou be able to discern, and take all things well without impediment.

A *pure* heart penetrates heaven, and hell.

According as every one is *interiourly*, so he judgeth *exteriourly*.

If there be (any) joy in the world, surely a man of a *pure* heart possesseth it.

If there be any-where tribulation and affliction; an evil conscience must needs feel it.

As iron, put into the fire, loseth the rust, and becoms fiery glowing; So a man, wholly converting himself to *God*, becomes fervent, and is changed into a new man.

3. WHEN a man begins to grow cold, then he is afraid of small labours, and willingly receives outward consolations.

But when he begins perfectly to overcome himself, and to walk manfully in the way of *God*, then doth he esteem those things but leight, which before were heavy to him.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the consideration of our Selves.

I. **W**EE cannot much trust to our selves, because we often want *grace*, and understanding.

There is but little *light* in us, and that we quickly lose, through negligence. *Jer.* 17.

Many times also we perceive not our inward blindness.

Many times we do ill, and, which is worse, we excuse it.

Sometimes we are moved with passion, and take it to be zeal.

We reprehend small things in others, and pass over great things in our selves. *Psal.* 140.

We quickly feel, and weigh what we suffer from others; but we mind not, what others suffer from us. *Mat.* 7.

G

He

He that would well and duly consider his own deeds, would find no reason to judg hardly of another.

2. AN *internal* man prefers the Care of Himself before all other cares. *Matt. 16.*

And he that looks diligently to himself, easily holds his peace of others.

Thou wilt never be *internal* and devout, unless thou pass over with silence other mens matters, and have a special eye to thine own self.

If thy mind be wholly on *God*, and thy Self; thou wilt little be moved with what thou seest abroad. *1 Cor. 4.*

Where art thou, when thou art not present to thy self?

When thou hast run over all, what hast thou profited, if thou neglect thy self? *Gal. 6.*

If thou wilt (as thou oughtest)
enjoy

enjoy *true peace* and *union*, thou must lay all the world aside, and look only to thy self.

3. THOU wilt profit much, if thou wilt keep thy mind free from all temporal cares.

Thou wilt fail exceedingly, if thou esteem any temporal thing.

Let nothing be high, nothing great, nothing pleasant, nothing acceptable to thee, but *purely God*, or what is from *God*.

Esteem all comfort vain which thou receivest from any creature.

Eccl. 1.

A Soul that loves *God*, despiseth all that is under Him.

God alone is eternal, immense, and filling all places; is the comfort of the soul, and *true joy* of the heart.

CHAP. VI.

Of the joy of a good Conscience.

I. **T**HE glory of a good man is the testimony of a good Conscience. *1 Cor. 1.*

Keep a good conscience, and thou shalt alwayes have joy. *Wisd. 17.*

A good conscience can bear very much, and is very joyful in adversities.

An evil conscience is always fearful, and unquiet.

Thou shalt rest sweetly, if thy heart do not reprehend thee.

Rejoyce not, but when thou hast done well.

Sinners have never *true* joy, nor feel *true inward peace* :

Because, *There is no peace to the wicked*, saith the Lord, *Isay 48.*
Luke 10.

And

And if they should say, *We are in peace, and no evil will fall upon us, who shall dare to hurt us?* Believe them not, for upon a sudden the wrath of God shall rise, and their deeds shall be turned into nothing & their conceits shall perish, *Isay 37.*

2. To glory in tribulation, is not hard to him that loves; for, so to glory, is, to glory in the Cross of our Lord. *Rom. 8. Gal. 6.*

That glory is short, which is given and received from men.

Grief ever waits on the glory of the world. *Joh. 5.*

The glory of good men is in their consciences, not in the tongues of men, *2 Cor. 5.*

The gladness of the just is from God, and in God; and their joy is of the Truth.

He that desires true and everlasting glory, cares not for temporal.

He that seeks temporal glory, or doth not from his heart condemn it, is convinced to have but little love for heavenly glory.

He hath great quiet of mind who cares not for praises, or dispraises.

3. HE whose conscience is pure, will easily be content, and pacified.

Thou art not more holy for being praised, nor worse if dispraised.

What thou art, That thou art; neither oughtest thou to be accounted greater than what thou art in the sight of *God*.

If thou consider well what thou art *within*, thou wilt not care what men say of thee *abroad*. 1 *King*. 16.

Man beholds the face, but God sees the heart.

Man considers the actions, but *God* weighs the intentions.

To do always well, and esteem
little

little of thy self, is a sign of an humble mind.

To refuse comfort from any creature, is a token of great *purity*, and *interiour* confidence.

4. IT is evident, that he who seeks no outward witness for himself, hath committed himself wholly to God.

For, not he who commends himself (saith St. Paul) is approved, but he whom God commends. 2 Cor. 10.

To walk *interiourly* with God, and not to be possessed with any outward affection, is the state of an internal man.

C H A P. VII.

Of the Love of JESUS above all things.

1. **B**Lessed is he who understands what it is to *love* JESUS, and to despise himself for JESUS.

One beloved thing must be left for another, because JESUS alone will be beloved above all things.

Psal. 118.

The love of a creature is deceitful and unconstant.

The *love* of JESUS, is faithful and perseverant.

Whosoever cleaveth to a creature, shall fall with that which is subject to fall.

Whosoever embraceth JESUS, shall stand firmly for ever.

Love him, and keep *him* for thy friend, who, when all goes away, will

will not leave thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end, *Matth.* 12.

2. THOU must at last be separated from all creatures, whether thou wilt or no.

Cleave fast to JESUS; living and dying; and commit thy self to His trust, who, when all fails, can only assist thee.

Thy *Beloved* is of such a nature, that *he* will have no partner, but will have thy *heart* alone, and sit in it like a King in his own throne.

If thou didst know well, how to free thy self from all creatures, JESUS would willingly dwell with thee.

What trust soever thou puttest in any besides JESUS, is all no better than lost.

Do not trust and rely on a reed shaken with every puff of wind: for, *All flesh is hay, and the glory thereof*

thereof shall wither away as the flower of the field, I say 40.

3. THOU shalt soon be deceived, if thou regardest only mens outward appearance.

If thou seek comfort and profit in worldly things, thou shalt often lose by it.

If, in all, thou seek JESUS, thou shalt surely find JESUS.

If thou seek thy self, thou shalt also find thy self, but to thine own ruine.

For, Man hurts himself more by not seeking JESUS; than the whole world, and all his enemies besides do, or can.

CHAP.

CH A P. VIII.

Of familiar Friendship with JESUS.

1. **W**HEN JESUS is present, all is well, and nothing seems difficult :

But, when JESUS is absent, every thing is hard.

When JESUS speaks not within us, our comfort is poor :

But if JESUS speak but only one word, we abound with consolation.

Did not *Mary Magdalene* presently rise from the place where she wept, when *Martha* said to her, *The Master is here, and calls thee.* Joh. 13?

A happy hour ! when JESUS calls from tears to joy of spirit. *Matth. 16.*

How dry and hard art thou without JESUS ? how foolish, and vain if thou desirest any thing out of JESUS ? Is not this a greater damage

dammmage than to lose the whole world?

2. WHAT can the world profit thee, without JESUS?

To be without JESUS is a grievous Hell, and to be with JESUS is a sweet Paradise. *Rom. 8.*

If JESUS be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee.

Whosoever finds JESUS, finds a good treasure; yea, a Good above all goods. *Mar. 13.*

And he that loseth JESUS, loseth too much, and more than the whole world, *Luke 2.*

He is extreme poor, who lives without JESUS; and he is exceeding rich, who is well with JESUS.

3. IT is great skill to know, how to converse with JESUS; and great wisdom to know, how to keep Him.

Be

Be *humble* and *peaceable*, and JESUS will be with thee.

Be devout and quiet, and JESUS will remain with thee.

Thou mayst soon drive away JESUS, and lose his grace, if thou decline to outward things.

And if thou drive *him* from thee, and lose *him*, To whom then wilt thou fly? and, whom then wilt thou seek, for thy friend?

Thou canst not well live without a friend; and, if JESUS be not thy friend above all, thou wilt be too sorrowful and desolate.

Thou dost then foolishly, if thou trust and rejoyce in any other.

It is better that the whole world be against thee, than JESUS be offended with thee. *Gal. 6.*

Of all therefore that are dear to thee, let JESUS alone be thy special Beloved.

4. ALL things are to be loved for JESUS; and JESUS only, is to be loved for himself.

JESUS only is especially to be loved, who alone above all friends is found good and faithful.

For *Him*, and in *Him*, let all (as well foes as friends) be dear to thee.

And these are all to be prayed for, that they all may know and love *Him*. *Matt. 5.*

Never desire to be singularly praised or beloved; for, that appertaineth to *God* alone, who hath none like unto Himself. *Luke 6.*

Neither desire that the heart of any should be set on thee:

Nor do thou set thy heart on the love of any; but let JESUS be in thee, and in every good man.

Keep thy heart pure and free from captivity to any creature.

5. THOU

5. THOU must be naked and *pure in heart* in the sight of God, if thou wilt attend and see how sweet our Lord is.

And truly thou shalt never attain to this, unless thou be prevented and drawn by *his grace*, that all being emptied and dismissed, thou alone mayst be united to *Him Alone*.

For when the grace of God comes into man, then he is powerful for all things; and when it retires, then shall he be poor and weak, left as it were only to stripes.

When this happens, thou must not despair or be dejected, but resign thy self to the *Will of God* with indifference, and suffer all that shall befall thee for the glory of JESUS.

For, after winter follows summer, and the night being past, the day returns; and after a storm cometh a calm.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the want of all comfort.

I. **I**T is not hard, To despise human comfort when we have *divine*.

But it is much, and very much, To be able to want all consolation, both *divine* and humane, and to be willing for Gods honour to endure desolation of heart, and to seek himself in nothing, nor to regard his own desert.

What great matter is it, if thou be cheerful and devout at the coming of *grace*? This hour is wished-for by all men.

He rides at ease that is carried by the *grace of God*.

What wonder, if he feel no burthen, who is born up by the Almighty, and led by the Sovereign-guide?

2. WE

2. WE willingly receive some kind of comfort, and a man can hardly shake off himself.

The holy Martyr St. *Laurence* overcame the world with his Priest, because he despised whatever seemed delightful in the world.

And, for the love of *Christ*, he also meekly suffered the high Priest of *God*, Pope *Sixtus*, to be taken away from him.

He overcame therefore the love of the creature, for the *love* of the *Creator*; and chose rather the divine pleasure than human comfort.

Do thou also learn to forsake some necessary thing, and a beloved friend for the *love of God*.

Do not take it grievously, to be forsaken by a friend; knowing that, at length, we shall be all separated from one another.

3. A man must fight long, and much in himself before he can learn fully to overcome himself, and draw all his affections wholly unto *God*.

When a man trusts in himself, he easily slides into humane comforts.

But a *true lover of Christ*, and a diligent pursuer of Virtue, gives not himself to such solaces, nor seeks such sensible sweetnesse; but rather strong exercises, and to sustain hard labours, for *Christ*.

4. WHEN therefore God gives spiritual comforts, receive them with thankfulness; but know, It is the gift of *God*, not thy merit.

Be not puffed up; joy not too much, nor presume vainly: but, be thou more humble for the *grace* received, and more wary and fearful in all thy actions, for that hour will pass away, and temptations will follow.

When

When thou art deprived of comforts, do not presently despair, but with humility and patience expect the heavenly Visitation: for, *God* is able to return thee greater *grace* and comfort.

This is not new or strange to those that have experience in the wayes of *God*; for, in great Saints and ancient Prophets, there were, now-and-then, such kind of alterations.

5. WHEREUPON, One (then replenished with *grace*) said: *In my abundance, I will not be moved for ever, Psal. 29.*

But when *grace* was retired, he added what he found in himself, saying, *Thou turnedst thy face from me, and I was troubled, Psal. 29.*

Notwithstanding, he doth not despair in the midst of those changes, but more earnestly prayeth *God*; saying, *Unto thee, O Lord, will I cry,*
and

and I will pray unto my God. Psal.
29.

Lastly, he receives the fruit of his prayer, and witnesseth that he was heard, saying,

The Lord hath heard me, and taken pity upon me; The Lord is become my helper.

But wherein? *Thou hast turned (saith he) my sorrow into joy, and thou hast encompassed me with gladness.*

And, if great Saints have been thus dealt withal; we who are poor and weak ought not to despair, though we be sometimes hot, and sometime cold.

For, *The spirit comes and goes according to his own good pleasure, Joh. 3.*

Whereupon, blessed Job saith, *Thou dost visit him early in the morning, and suddenly dost thou prove him. Job. 7.*

6. WHERE-

6. WHEREIN then shall I hope? or, In what shall I put my trust? but only in the great mercy of *God*, and hope of heavenly *grace*?

For, whether I enjoy the presence of good men, or devout brethren and faithful friends, or holy books, or learned treatises, or sweet songs and hymns; All these help little, and favour little, when I am forsaken by *grace*, and left in mine own poverty. *Luke 9.*

At such a time, there is no better remedy than patience, and resignation to the will of *God*.

7. I never found any man so religious, but that sometimes he was forsaken by *grace*, and felt a decay of fervor.

No Saint was ever so highly rapt or illuminated, who was not tempted first or last.

For

For, he is not worthy of the high contemplation of *God*, who for *God* hath not been exercised with some tribulation.

For, Temptation going before is wont to be a sign of ensuing comfort.

Since heavenly comfort is promised to those, who are proved by temptation.

Whoso shall overcome (saith he) I will give him to eat of the tree of life. Apoc. 2.

8. MOREOVER, divine comfort is given to make a man stronger to bear adversities; and temptations follow, lest he should grow proud of that grace.

The Devil sleeps not, neither is our flesh as yet dead.

Cease not herfore to prepare thy self to the battle; for, on the right hand, and on the left, are enemies that never rest.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

Of gratitude for the Grace of God.

1. **W**Hy seekest thou Rest since thou wert born to Labour? *John. 5.*

Dispose thy selfe to patience rather than to comforts, and to bearing of the Cross rather than to Joy. *Luke. 14.*

What worldly person is there that would not willingly receive comfort and *spiritual* joy, if he could always obtain it?

For, Spiritual comforts exceed all the delights of the world and pleasures of the flesh.

For, All worldly delights are either vain or unclean; but *spiritual* delights are only pleasant and honest, produced by vertue, and infused by *God* into *pure* minds.

No

No man, notwithstanding can always enjoy these divine consolations at his own pleasure, by reason that the time of temptation doth not long cease.

2. FALSE liberty of mind and great confidence of our selves, are very opposite to divine visitation.

God doth well in giving the grace of comfort; but man doth ill in not returning it again wholly to God with thanksgiving.

And this is the reason, why the gifts of *grace* cannot flow in us, because we are ungrateful to the giver, and return them not wholly to the Head-fountain.

For *grace* is ever due to him, who is worthily thankful: And, that shall be taken from the proud which is wont to be given to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation which

which robs me of compunction; nor do I affect that contemplation which leads to haughtiness of mind.

For, all that is high, is not holy; nor every desire, pure; nor all that is sweet good; nor is every thing that is dear to us acceptable to God.

I willingly accept that *grace*, which makes me more humble, and fearful, and better disposed to forsake my self.

He who is taught by the gift of *grace*, and hath felt the scourge of wanting it, dares not attribute any good to himself, but rather will confess himself, poor and naked.

Give unto *God* what is His, and take to thy self what is thine; that is, give *God* thanks for his *grace*, and esteem nothing as thy own, but sin and the punishment due to it.

4. PUT thy self always in the lowest place, and the highest shall be
H given

given thee; for, the highest stands not without the lowest.

The greatest Saints in the sight of *God*, are the least in their own opinions; and the more glorious they be, the more humble are they in themselves.

Being full of truth and heavenly glory, they are not desirous of vain glory.

Being settled and grounded in *God*, they can in no sort be proud.

And they who ascribe all unto *God*, what good soever they have received, seek not glory of one another; but would have that glory which is from *God* alone, and desire above all to praise *God* in Himself and all the Saints; and always tend unto the same.

5. BEE thou grateful therefore for the least, and thou shalt be made worthy of the greater.

Let

Let the least be to thee even as the greatest, and the most contemptible even as a special gift.

If thou consider the worth of the Giver, no gift will seem little or of mean esteem.

For, nothing is little which is given by the greatest *God*.

Yea, though He give punishments and stripes, yet should it be grateful to us; for, whatsoever he permits to happen to us, is always for our salvation.

He then who desires to keep the *grace* of *God*, let him be thankful for *grace* which is given, and patient when it is taken away.

Let him pray, that it may return, and be wary and humble lest he lose it.

CHAP. XI.

Of the few lovers of the Cross of JESUS.

1. **J**ESUS hath now many lovers of *His* heavenly glory, but few bearers of *his* Cross.

He hath many that love comforts, but few that love tribulation.

He findes many companions of his table, but few of his abstinence.

All desire to rejoyce with JESUS, few are willing to suffer for *him*.

Many follow JESUS to the breaking of Bread, but few to the drinking of the Cup of his Passion, Luke. 9.22.

Many reverence *his* Miracles, but few follow the ignominy of the *Cross*; many love JESUS, while they

they feel no adversities.

Many promise and bless *him* as long as they receive comfort from *him*.

If JESUS hide himself and leave them a while, they either fall into murmuration, or into too much dejection.

2. But they who love JESUS for JESUS, and not for their own comfort, bless him no less in tribulation and anguish of heart, than in the highest comfort.

And if *he* should never give them comfort, they would notwithstanding always prayse *him*, and always give *him* thanks.

3. O how powerful is the love of JESUS, not mixed with false love or proper interest!

Are not they all to be called hirelings, who always seek comforts?

Are they not convinced to be rather lovers of themselves than of JESUS, who think always of their own profit and gain?

Where may such an one be found as will serve God without hope of reward?

4. IT is hard to find any one so spiritual, as to be naked from all things.

For, where shall we find a man truly poor in spirit, and naked from all creatures?

Far from hence and from the end of the world, is his price. Prov. 31.

If a man should give all his wealth, yet is it nothing.

And though he perform great penance and austerity, yet is it little.

And if he should attain all knowledge, yet is he far off.

And, if he should have attained great

great virtue and fervent devotion; yet, is there much wanting to him, to wit, One thing which is the most necessary of all for him. What is that?

That, having left all, he forsake himself, and wholly depart from himself, and retain no spark of self-love. *Matt. 6.*

And when he shall have done all he knows to be done, let him think he hath done nothing.

5. LET him not weigh that much that may be much esteemed, but let him confess in *truth* that he is an unprofitable servant, according to that saying, of *truth* *When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, that ye are unprofitable servants.* *Luke. 17.*

Then may he be truly poor and naked in *spirit*, and say with the Prophet, *I am all alone and poor.*

H 4

Yet

Yet no man is richer than he, no man more free, no man more powerful than he, who knows how to forsake himself, and all things else, and place himself in the lowest place.

CHAP. XII.

Of the high-way of the holy Cross.

1. **T**HIS speech seems hard to many, *Deny thy self, take up thy Cross, and follow JESUS.* Mat. 16.

But it will be much harder to hear that last word: *Go from me ye cursed into everlasting fire.* Mat. 25.

They who now willingly bear and follow the *Cross*, shall not then fear the sentence of eternal damnation.

This sign of the *Cross*, shall be in
heaven

heaven, when our *Lord* shall come to Judgment.

Then all the servants of the *Cross*, who in their life-time conformed themselves to *Christ* crucified, shall draw neer unto *Christ* their Judge with great confidence.

2. WHY then dost thou fear to take up the *Cross* which leads to a Kingdom?

In the *Cross* is health, in the *Cross* is life, in the *Cross* is protection from enemies, in the *Cross* is infusion of spiritual sweetness, in the *Cross* is strength of mind, in the *Cross* is joy of spirit, in the *Cross* is height of virtue, in the *Cross* is perfection of sanctity.

There is no health of soul nor hope of everlasting life, but in the *Cross*.

Take up therefore thy *Cross*, and follow JESUS, and thou shalt go

H 5

into

into everlasting life.

He went before, bearing his own *Cross*; and dyed for thee on the *Cross*, that thou mightest always bear the *Cross*, and desire to dy on the *Cross*; for, if thou dyest with *him*, thou shalt also live with him:

And if thou art his companion in pain, thou shalt also be his companion in glory.

3. BEHOLD! In the *Cross* is all, all consists in dying; and there is no other way to life and to true *inward peace*, but the way of the *Cross* and daily mortification.

Go where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy *Cross*.

Dispose and order all things according to thy will and judgment, yet shalt thou ever suffer somewhat
either

either willingly or unwillingly, and so thou shalt still find the *Cross*.

For either thou shalt feel pain in thy body, or sustain in thy soul tribulation of *spirit*.

4. THOU shalt be sometimes forsaken of *God*, and sometimes provoked by thy neighbour, and which is more thou shalt often be irksome to thy self.

Neither canst thou be delivered or eased by any remedy or comfort; but, thou must undergo it, as long as shall please *God*.

For, *God* would have thee learn to suffer tribulation without comfort, that thou mayest submit thy self wholly to Him, and become more humble by tribulation.

No man feels the Passion of Christ so lively, as he who hath occasion to suffer the like.

The *Cross* therefore is always ready,

ready , and expects thee every where.

Thou canst not escape it whithersoever thou go ; for, wheresoever thou goest , thou carriest thy self with thee, and shalt always find thy self.

Turn thy self to things above thee and below thee, without and within thee, and in all these thou shalt find the *Cross*.

And every-where thou must of necessity have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace and deserve an everlasting Crown.

5. IF thou dost bear the Cross willingly , it will bear thee and guide thee to thy desired end ; to wit, where there shall be an end of suffering, though there be none here.

If thou bear it unwillingly, thou makest it burthensome and much more

more heavy to thee, nevertheless thou must endure it.

If thou cast away one *Cross*, thou wilt certainly find another, and perhaps a heavier.

6. **THINK'ST** thou to escape that which no man could ever escape?

What Saint was there ever in the world without his *Cross* and affliction?

Our **Lord JESUS CHRIST** himself, was not one hour of his life without suffering.

For, It behooved, that Christ should suffer, and rise from death, and so enter into glory. Luke. 24.

And how dost thou seek another way than this Royal way which is the way of the *Cross*?

7. **THE** whole life of *Christ* was a *Cross* and Martyrdom; and, Dost thou

thou seek joy and rest for thy self?

Thou erreſt, thou erreſt, if thou ſeek any other thing than to ſuffer tribulation: for, this mortal life is full of miſeries, and ſigned round about with *Croſſes*.

And the greater progreſs a man makes in *ſpirit*, the more heavy croſſes doth he often meet withal; becauſe the grief of his baniſhment grows greater through love.

8. BUT notwithstanding; Man that is ſo many ways afflicted is not without ſome ſort of conſolation; becauſe he knoweth Great good doth accrue unto him by bearing his Croſs.

For, whiſt he willingly ſubjects himſelf to it, all the burthen of tribulation is turned into confidence of divine comfort.

And the more the fleſh is waſted by affliction, the more the *ſpirit* is ſtrength-

strengthened by *inward* consolation.

And sometimes, he is so much comforted with this love to tribulation and adversity, that he might be conformable to JESUS CHRIST crucified; that he desires not to be without sorrow and trouble.

For, he believes himself to be so much the more pleasing to God, as he shall be able to suffer more for Him.

This is not the virtue of man, but the *grace* of *Christ*; that can, and doth perform such great things in frail flesh; that, what naturally it abhors, and flies, even that, through fervour of spirit, it lays hold on, and *loves*.

9. IT is not according to mans inclination to bear and love the *Cross*; to chastize, and subdue the body; to fly honours, to endure contumelies

lyes willingly, to despise himself, and wish to-be-despised; to suffer all adversities and detriments, and to desire no prosperity in this world.

If thou dost look on thy self, thou canst not do such things of thy self.

But if thou dost confide in our *Lord*, strength will be given thee from heaven, and the world and the flesh shall be subject to thy power.

Nor shalt thou fear thine enemy the Devil, if thou beest armed with *faith*, and signed with the Cross of Christ.

10. RESOLVE, therefore, like a good and faithful servant of *Christ* to bear manfully the *Cross* of thy *Lord*, who for thy love was crucified.

Prepare thy self to bear many adversities, and divers kinds of troubles in this miserable life; for, so it will be with thee wheresoever thou

thou art, and so surely thou wilt find it wheresoever thou dost hide thy self.

It must be so with thee of necessity, and there is no means to avoid Tribulations and *Crosses*, but to bear them patiently.

Drink of the Chalice of our *Lord* lovingly, if thou dost desire to be his friend, and have part with Him.

Leave the desire of Comfort to *God*, let him do therein as best pleaseth him. *Matt. 20.*

Set thou thy heart upon suffering tribulations, and account them the greatest comforts. *Joh. 18.*

For, The sufferings of this life are not condigne to the meriting of future glory, which shall be revealed in us, Rom. 8.

Though thou alone couldest suffer them all.

II. When

11. WHEN thou shalt come to this pass, that tribulation becoms sweet, and savoury to thee for the *love of Christ*; then, conceive it to be well with thee, for thou hast found a paradise upon earth.

As long as it is grievous to thee to suffer, and that thou seekest to avoid it; so long shalt thou be ill at ease, and the trouble which thou flyest from, will follow thee every where.

12. IF thou dost settle thy self to what thou oughtest, (to wit) To suffer and dy to thy self; it will quickly be better with thee; and thou shalt find *peace*.

Though thou shouldst have been rapt to the third heaven with Saint *Paul*, thou art not thereby assured that thou shalt suffer no contradiction. 2 *Cor.* 12.

I (said JESUS) will shew him
how

how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake. Act. 9.

It remains therefore that thou must suffer, if thou desire to love JESUS, and perpetually to serve him.

13. I would to God thou wert worthy to suffer something, for the name of JESUS ! How great glory would it be to thee, what joy to the Saints of God, and how great edification unto thy neighbour ?

Every one commends Patience, & Bearing of the Cross; but Alas ! Few desire to suffer it.

With great reason, ought'st thou to suffer a little for CHRIST, since many suffer greater things for the World.

14. K N O W for certain, thou oughtest to lead a dying life

And

And the more every one dies to himself, so much more doth he begin to live to God.

No man is fit to comprehend heavenly things, who submits not himself to suffer adversities for **CHRIST**.

Nothing is more acceptable to *God*, nothing more wholesome to our selves in this world, then willingly to suffer adversities for **CHRIST**.

And, if it were in thy choice, thou shouldst rather choose to suffer with **CHRIST** than to be delighted with many comforts : for, so thou wouldst more resemble **CHRIST**, and be more conformable to all the *Saints*.

For, The merit and perfection of our state of life, consists not in much sweetness, and comfort, but rather in suffering great afflictions and troubles.

15. Had

15. Had there truly been any thing better and more available to the salvation of man than suffering, surely *Christ* would have shewed it by word, and example.

But, He plainly exhorted all the disciples that followed him, to bear the *Cross*, saying, *If any one will come after me, let him Deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.* Luke. 9.

So that when we have read, and searched all; let this be the final conclusion, that *Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdome of God* Acts. 14.

The End of the Second Book.

THE



THE
THIRD BOOK
OF THE
IMITATION
OF
CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

Of the Internal Speech of Christ to a Faithful Soul.

I. **I** *WIL* hearken to what my Lord
God will speak in me, Psal.
84.

Blessed is that soul that hears her
Lord

Lord speaking in her, and receives words of comfort from *His* mouth.

Blessed are those ears that hear the soft whispers of *Gods inspirations*, and listen not to the murmuring noise of the *world*, 1 *King*.3.

Blessed indeed are those ears, which hearken not to the outward voice, but to *truth*, speaking and teaching inwardly, *Matt*.13.

Blessed are the eyes, which being shut to all outward things, are open to those *within*.

Blessed are they who penetrate *internal* things, and endeavour to prepare themselves more and more, by daily exercises, to the attaining of *heavenly secrets*.

Blessed are they who attend wholly to *God*, and shake from themselves all worldly hinderances.

Observe these things, O my soul, and shut up the doors of thy senses, that thou mayst hear *what the Lord*
thy

thy God speaks in thee. Psal. 8.

2. THUS saith thy beloved, *I am thy salvation, thy peace, and thy life.* Psal. 34.

Keep thy self with me, and thou shalt find peace.

Forfake all transitory things, and seek for eternal:

What are worldly things but deceipts? And what will all creatures avail thee, if thou beest forsaken by thy Creator?

Therefore, leaving all earthly things, endeavour to please thy *Creator*, and be faithful to *him*, that thou mayest attain true happiness.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

That, Truth speaks inwardly, without noise of words.

I. **S**PEAK, Lord, for thy servant heareth. 1 King. 3.

I am thy servant, give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. Psal. 118.

Incline my heart to the words of thy mouth, let thy speech distil as dew.

The children of Israel said heretofore to Moses, *Speak thou to us, and we will hear thee, but let not the Lord speak to us lest we dy.* Exod. 20.

Not so, Lord, not so, I beseech Thee; but rather, with the Prophet *Samuel*, I humbly and earnestly

I ly

ly intreat thee, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth:*

Let not *Moses*, nor any of the Prophets, speak unto me, but do *thou* rather speak, my *Lord God*, Who art the inspirer, and enlightner of all the Prophets.

For, *Thou* alone without them canst perfectly instruct me; but they, without *Thee*, profit nothing.

2. THEY indeed pronounce words, but give not the *Spirit*.

They speak exceeding well, but (if *Thou* be silent) inflame not the heart.

They deliver the letters, but *Thou* openest the sense.

They produce Mysteries, but *Thou* openest the secret meaning of them.

They declare the commandments, but *Thou* enablest to fulfil them.

They shew the way, but *Thou* givest strength to walk. They

They work only outwardly, but
Thou dost instruct and *inlighten* the
heart.

They water the outside, but *Thou*
givest fruitfulness.

They cry loud with words, but
Thou givest understanding to the
hearer.

3. Let not *Moses* therefore speak
to me, but *Thou*, my *Lord God*, e-
ternal truth; lest perhaps I dy and
become fruitless, if I be only out-
wardly warmed, and not *inwardly*
inflamed; and lest the Word being
heard and not fulfilled, known and
not loved, believed and not obser-
ved, should rise up in judgment a-
gainst me.

Speak therefore, O Lord, for thy
servant heareth, for thou hast the
words of eternal life. 1 King. 3. Joh. 6.

Speak thou to me, to the comfort of
my soul, & the amendment of my whol
I 2 life,

life; and to thy praise, and glory,
and everlasting honour.

C H A P. III.

*That the words of God are to be heard
with humility; and that many
weigh them not.*

I. SON, hear *my* words for they
are sweet, and exceed all the
wisdom of all the philosophers, and
of all the wise men of this world.

*My words are spirit, and life, and
not to be weighed by humane under-
standing, Joh. 6.*

They are not to be drawn to vain
pleasure; but to be heard in silence,
and to be received with all humility,
and great affection.

2. AND I said, *Blessed is the man
whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and
shalt*

shalt teach him thy Law, that thou mayst ease him from all evil days, that he be not destroyed upon earth.
Psal. 93.

3. *I (saith our Lord) have taught the Prophets from the beginning, Heb. 2: and cease not continually to speak to every one; but many are hardened, and give no Ear to my speech.*

The greater number listen more willingly to the world than to *God*, and follow sooner the desires of the flesh than the will of *God*.

The world promiseth temporal and small things, and is served with great diligence; I promise most high, and eternal things, and their hearts are drousy and dull.

Who is he that serves, & obeys *me* in all things, with so great care as the world, and the Lords therof, are served?

Blush o *Sidon* (saith the Sea); if they ask Why? Hear the reason.

For a small living, a long voyage is undertaken; but for eternal life, many will scarce moove a foot from the ground. Esay. 23.

A reward of a small price, is sought after; sometimes foul quarrells arise for a penny; they fear not to toyl day and night for a small promise and a trifle.

4. BUT alas! to purchase an unchangeable good, and inestimable reward, and the supream honour and eternal glory, they are unwilling to take the least pains.

Blush therefore thou slothful, and murmuring servant, that they are more industrious for perdition, than thou for life *eternal. Esay. 25.*

They rejoyce more in *vanity* than thou in the *truth*.

They are sometimes deceived of
their

their hopes ; but *my* promise never deceives any , nor do I send any away empty that trust in *me*. *Rom. 1. Mat. 24.*

What I promised I will perform , what I have said I will make good , if thou remain in my love to the end. Mat. 24. Rev. 2.

I am the rewarder of all good men , I am the powerful preserver of all devout persons. *Matt. 15.*

5. WRITE my words in thy heart , and weigh them diligently , for they will be very necessary in time of temptation.

What thou understandest not when thou readest , thou shalt know in the day of visitation.

I am wont to visit my elect two manner of ways ; (to wit) by Temptation , and Consolation.

And , I read them two lessons , every day ; in one , I reprehend their

Vices; in the other, *I* exhort them to the increase of Virtues.

He who hath *my* words, and despiseth them, hath One that will judg him at the last day.

*A Prayer, to implore the grace
of devotion.*

6. O my God, thou art all my good; and, Who am I, that dare speak unto thee? Jer.18.

I am thy most poor servant, and vile worm; much poorer, and more contemptible than I know, or dare express.

Remember notwithstanding, O Lord, that I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing.

Thou alone art good, just, & holy; *thou* canst do all things, perform'st all things, fillest all things, leaving a sinner only void of all good.

Remember *thy* mercies, ô Lord, and fill my heart with *thy* grace, who

who wilt not have *thy* works to be in vain.

How can I support my self in this miserable life, unless thy mercy and grace comfort me?

Turn not thy face from me, delay not thy visitation, withdraw not thy comfort, lest my soul become as earth without water. Psal. 68. Psal. 143.

Lord, teach me to fulfil thy will, and teach me to live worthily, and humbly in thy sight.

For, Thou art my wisdom, and dost truly know me; and didst know me before the world was made, and before I was born into the world.

CHAP. IIII.

*That we ought to live in truth, and
humility, in the sight of God.*

I. SON, walk before *me* in *truth*,
and seek *me* always in *simplicity* of heart.

He that walks before *me* in *truth*,
shall be defended from evil incur-
sions, and *truth* shall deliver him
from seducers, and from detractions
of the wicked. *Gen. 17. Wisd. 1.*

If *truth* shall free thee, thou shalt
be *truly* free; and thou wilt not care
for the vain speeches of men. *Joh. 8.*

O Lord, what *thou* sayst is *true*,
and accordingly let it be done with
me.

Let *thy truth* teach me, let it keep
me, and bring me to an happy end.

Let it deliver me from all evil
affection,

affection, and all inordinate love, and I shall walk with *thee* in great freedom of heart.

2. I will teach thee (saith *Truth*) those things which are right and pleasing in *my* sight.

Think of thy sins with great sorrow and grief, and never esteem thy self to be any thing for thy good works.

Thou art truly a sinner, subject to many passions, and intangled.

Of thy self thou always tendest to nothing; and art soon cast down, soon overcome, soon troubled, soon dissolved. *1 Cor. 4.*

Thou hast nothing wherein to glory; but many things for which thou oughtst to vilify thy self; for thou art much weaker than thou art able to comprehend.

3. LET therefore nothing seem much

their pride, and curiosity. *1 Cor. 3.*

4. FEAR the Judgments of *God*; dread the wrath of the Almighty, discuss not the works of the Highest; but search thine own iniquities, how many ways thou hast offended, and how much good thou hast neglected.

Some carry their devotion only in books; some in pictures, some in outward signes and figures.

Some have *me* in their mouth, but little in their hearts. *Esay. 29.*

There are others whose understanding being enlightned, and affections purified, do aspire continually to everlasting happiness, are unwilling to hear of earthly things, and grieve to be subject to the necessities of Nature.

And these feel what the *spirit of truth* speaks in them, because it teacheth them to despise earthly things,
and

and love heavenly things, to neglect the world, and all day and night to aspire after heaven.

CHAP. V.

Of the wonderful effect of divine love.

I. **I** BLESS thee, *ô heavenly Father,*
Father of my Lord JESUS
CHRIST, who hast vouchsafed to
 be mindful of me poor wretch.

O Father of mercies, and God of
all consolation, 2 Cor. 1. I give
 thee thanks who sometimes dost
 comfort me, unworthy of all com-
 fort.

I evermore bless, and glorify
 thee, with thy Only-begotten Son,
 and Holy-Ghost the Comforter, for
 ever and ever.

O my Lord God, my holy lover; when
 thou

thou shalt come into mine heart;
then all my *interior* will rejoyce.

*Thou art my glory, and the ex-
sultation of my heart; Thou art my
hope, and refuge in the day of my
tribulation.* Psal. 32. Psal. 131.

2. BUT, because I am yet weak
in *love*, and imperfect in virtue;
therefore, have I need to be com-
forted, and strengthened by *thee*.

Wherefore visit me often, and
instruct me with *thy* holy discipline.

Free me from all evil passions,
and heal my heart from inordinate
affections.

That, being cured, and well
purged within, I may be made fit
to love, strong to suffer, and con-
stant to persevere.

3. *LOVE* is a great thing, and a
soveraign good; which of it self
makes every burthen light, and e-
qually

qually bears all unequal burthens.

For, it supports the burthen without being burthened thereby, and makes even bitter things to be sweet and savoury.

The noble *love* of JESUS spurs us on to noble actions, & excites always a desire of greater perfection.

Love still aymes at high matters, and will not be kept down by base things.

Love will be free, and estranged from all worldly affection, to the end that the *interior* fight thereof may not be darkned, & that it may not be intangled by any temporal commodity, nor cast down by any incommo-
dity.

Nothing is sweeter than *love*, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing more full, or better, in heaven or in earth.

For, Love proceeds from *God*, &
cannot

cannot rest but in *God* above all created things.

4. WHOSOEVER *loves*, he flies, runs, and rejoyceth; he is free, and not to be retained.

He gave *all for all*, and hath *all in all*; since he rests in One supreme above all, from Whom all good flows, and proceeds.

He regards not the gift, but turns himself to the *giver* above all good; *Love* often knows no measure, but is fervent above all measure.

Love feels no burthen, weighs no pains, desires to do more than it can; complains not of impossibility, because it conceives all things to be lawful, and possible.

And therefore it is able to do all, and accomplisheth many things, and subdues them to the affection; whereas he that *loves* not, faints and falls down.

5. LOVE

5. LOVE is watchful, and sleeping sleeps not; being wearied, is not tired; streightned, and not oppressed; frightened, and yet not troubled; but, like a lively flame, and fiery spark, ascends forcibly, and passeth-thorow, securely. *Rom.8.*

He that *loves*, knows what this voyce crys; a loud cry in the ears of *God* is the burning love of the Soul, which saith, *O my God, my love, Thou art wholly mine, and I wholly thine.*

6. INCREASE my *love*, that I may learn, with *the interior* mouth of my heart, to taste how sweet it is, to *love God*, and to be dissolved, and swim in *love*.

Let me be seized with love, ascending above my self, through excess of fervor, and amazement.

Let

Let me sing the song of *love*, and follow *thee* my *Beloved* ascending on high; let my soul faint in *thy* praise, and rejoyce through *love*.

Let me *love thee* more than my Self; and my Self only for *Thee*; and all in *Thee* who do truly love thee; as the law of *love* commands, which shines from *Thee*.

7. *LOVE* is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant, and delightful; strong, patient, faithful, prudent, long-suffering, couragious, and no self-seeker. 1 *Cor.* 13.

For, Where a man seeks himself, there he falls from *love*. *Phil.* 2.

Love is circumspect, humble, and upright, not remiss, nor leight, nor given to vanity; sober, chaste, stable, quiet, and watchful over all the Senses.

Love is subject, and obedient to Prelates, vile and abject to it self; devout

devout and grateful to God; always trusting and hoping in Him, even when it hath no taste of God: for, there is no living in *love* without pain. 1 Cor. 10.

8. Whosoever is not ready to suffer all things, and to submit himself to the will of his *beloved*, is not worthy to be called a *lover*.

A *Lover* ought for his beloved willingly to embrace all that is hard, and bitter; and never to forsake him, for any contrary accidents whatsoever.

CHAP. VI.

Of the proof of true Love.

1. SON, thou art not yet a strong, and prudent Lover. (*Why Lord!*)

Because thou givest over for a small

small adversity, and seekest comfort too earnestly.

A stout *lover* is stable in temptations, and gives no credit to the crafty persuasions of the Enemy.

As I please him in prosperity, so I do not displease him in adversity.

2. A prudent *lover* considers not so much the gift of the *lover*, as the *love* of the giver.

He more esteems the good-will than the valew, and placeth all gifts beneath his *beloved*.

A Noble *lover* rests not in the gift, but in *Me* above any gift.

All is not therefore lost, because thou hast sometimes less taste of *Me* and my Saints, than thou wouldst.

That good, and sweet desire which thou sometimes feelest, is the effect of *present Grace*; and a certain foretaste of the heavenly country, whereon we must not rely

ly toomuch, because it comes, and goes.

But, To fight against the evil motions of the mind which may arise, and to despise the suggestions of the devil, That is a sign of virtue, and of great merit. *Matt. 4.*

3. LET not, therefore, strange fancies disturb thee, of what nature soever they are; but keep a firm purpose, and upright intention to God.

Neither is it an illusion when suddenly thou art rapt on high, and presently returnst to thy accustomed foolish cogitations of heart.

For, thou dost rather unwillingly suffer them than cause them, and as long as they displease thee, and thou strivest against them, it is merit, and not loss.

4. KNOW, that thy old Enemy
strives

strives altogether to hinder thy good desires, and to divert thee from all devout exercises, (to wit) from the worshipping of the Saints, from the devout remembrance of *my passion*, from the profitable remembrance of thy sins, from the custody of thine own heart, and from a firm purpose of profiting in virtue.

He suggests to thee many evil thoughts, that he may cause thee to feel a tediousness, and horror, and so withdraw thee from prayer, and reading of devout books.

Humble Confession doth displease him; and if he could, he would make thee quit the holy Communion.

Trust him not, nor care for him, though he often set snares of deceit to intrap thee.

Charge him with it when he suggests evil and unclean things, and say unto him.

Avoid,

Avoid, unclean spirit Mat. 4. Blush miserable wretch! *Thou* art very filthy who bring'st such things to my ears.

Depart from me wicked Deceiver, thou shalt have no part in me; but JESUS shall be with me as a strong warrior, and thou shalt stand confounded.

I had rather dy, and undergo any torment, than consent unto thee.

Hold thy peace, and be silent; though thou trouble me never so much, I will hear thee no more.

The Lord is my light and salvation; whom then shall I fear? Psal. 106.

If whole armies were against me, my heart shall not be afraid; the Lord is my helper, and Redeemer.

5. FIGHT like a good souldier; and, if thou sometimes fall through frailty, take greater courage than before;

before; hoping to receive more abundant *grace*; and take heed of Vain complacence, and Pride.

Many are led thereby into error, and fall oftentimes into almost incurable blindness.

Let the fall of proud persons foolishly presuming of themselves, serve thee for a warning, and keep thee continually in humility.

CHAP. VII.

That, Grace is to be hid under the veil of Humility.

I. SON, It is more profitable, and secure for thee, to hide the grace of devotion, and not to extol thy self, nor speak much thereof, nor value it much, but rather despise thy self, and be afraid of it, as given to one unworthy.

K

This

This affection is not to be cleaved unto, which may be quickly changed into the contrary.

When thou art in *grace*, think how miserable, and needy, thou art wont to be without it.

Nor doth the profit of a spiritual life consist so much in receiving the *grace* of comfort, as in bearing the want thereof with humility, patience, & resignation; so as it makes thee not more slothful in the exercise of *prayer*, nor cause thee to neglect the rest of thy accustomed good works: but that thou willingly perform what lyes in thee, according to thy ability and understanding, not wholly neglecting thy self, through the dryness and auxiety of mind which thou feelest.

2. FOR, there be many who, when it succeeds not well with them, grow forthwith impatient, and slothful.

The

The way of man is not always in his own power, but it belongs to *God* to give, and to comfort whom *He* will, when *He* will, and how much *he* will, as it shall please *him*, and no more. *Jer.* 10. *Rom.* 9.

Some unadvisedly have ruined themselves through the grace of devotion, because they would do more than they well could; not weighing the measure of their weakness, but following the desire of their heart, rather than the judgment of their reason.

And because they presumed of greater matters, than were pleasing to *God*, they therefore lost *his* grace.

They who built themselves nests in heaven, were made needy, and left in a dejected state; to the end that being humbled, and impoverished, they may learn not to fly with their own wings; but to hope under *Mine*.

• Those who are yet new and unacquainted in the way of our *Lord*; unless they govern themselves by the counsel of discreet persons, may easily be deceived, and overthrown.

3. AND if they will rather follow their own judgment than believe the experienced; their end will be dangerous, if they cannot be drawn from their own conceits.

Those who are wise in their own conceits, seldom suffer themselves to be governed humbly by others.

A little knowledg and a weak understanding with humility, is better than great treasures of Learning, with vain Complacence.

It is better for thee to have little than much, of that whereof thou mayst be proud.

He doth not discreetly, who gives himself wholly to mirth, forgetting his former want, and the chaste fear
of

of *God*, which fears to lose the *grace* which is offered.

Neither is he also virtuously wise enough, who in time of adversity, or any tribulation whatsoever, gives way to thoughts of despair; and thinks, and conceives less confidently of *Me* than he ought.

4. **H**E who is too secure in the time of *peace*, will often be found too much dejected, and fearful in time of war. 1 *Thes.* 3.

If thou couldst always continue humble, and lowly within thy self; and temper and govern thy soul well; thou wouldst not fall so easily into danger, and offend.

It is good counsel that thou shouldst think when thou art in fervour of *spirit*, what will become of thee when that light shall leave thee. *Job.* 17.

And, if that happen, to remember

ber that light may return, which for thy instruction, and *my glory* I have for a time withdrawn.

5. SUCH a tryal is oftentimes more profitable than if thou shouldst always enjoy prosperity according to thy desire.

For, a man's deserts are not to be judged by the many Visions, and comforts which he receives, nor by his knowledg in Scriptures, nor by his being placed in high degree, but by his being grounded in *true humility*, and replenished with *divine charity*, and that he always seeks *purely* and intirely the honour of *God*, and esteem nothing of himself, but with a sincere heart despiseth himself, and rejoyceth more to be despised, and humbled by others, than to be honoured. *Psal. 83.*

C H A P. VIII.

Of a mean esteem of ones self, in the sight of God.

I. **I** WILL speak to my Lord though
I am but dust & ashes. Gen. 18.

If I esteem better of my self behold *thou* dost stand against me, and my sins bear true witness against me, nor can I contradict them.

But if I abase my self, and reduce my self to nothing, and cast away all self-concept, and count my self as I am, but dust; *thy grace* will be favourable to me, and *thy light* neer my heart, and all esteem how little soever, will be swallowed up in the depth of my Nothing, and perish for ever.

Then wilt thou shew me my self, what I am, what I have
K 4 been,

been, and from what I came.

For, I am nothing, and know it not.

If I be left to my self, behold I become nothing, and a mass of infirmity:

But if thou suddenly look upon me, I am presently strengthened, and replenished with new joy.

And it is verp wonderful, that I (who of my own weight sink continually to the ground) am so suddenly raised, and so graciously embraced by *thee*.

2. IT is *thy love* that doth this, preventing, and releiving me freely in so many necessities, preserving me also from grievous perils, and delivering me (as I may truly say) from innumerable evils.

For, by loving of my self ill, I lost my self, and by seeking *thee* alone, and *purely loving thee*, I found

found both my self and *thee*, and through *thy* love, have brought my self more profoundly to nothing.

For thou, O most sweet JESUS, dost deal with me above all desert, and above all that I dare hope or ask for.

3. BLESSED be *thou*, my God; for though I am unworthy of all good, yet thine infinite goodness ceaseth not to do good, even to the ungrateful, and such as are averted from *thee*.

Convert us to *thee*, that we may be grateful, humble, and devout; for, thou art our safety, our power, and our strength.

C H A P. I X.

*That all things are to be referred to
God as to the last End.*

I. SON, I ought to be thy supream
and last end, if thou desire
to be *truly* blessed.

By this intention, thy affection
which is oftentimes inordinately
inclined to it self, & unto creatures,
shall be purified.

For if thou seek thy self in any
thing, thou dost presently wither,
and dry.

Refer therefore all things chiefly
to *me*; for it is *I*, who have given
thee all.

Consider every thing as flowing
from thy sovereign good, and there-
fore all things are to be reduced to
me as to their first Beginning.

2. OBT

21. OUT of *me*, as out of a living fountain, the little and great, the rich and poor, *do draw the water of life.* Joh. 4.

And whosoever shall willingly, and freely serve *me*, he shall receive *grace for grace.*

But he that will glory out of *me*, or take delight in any particular good, shall not be grounded in any true joy, nor enjoy freedom of heart, but shall be hindred, and straightned many ways. 1 *Cor.* 1.

Therefore, thou must not ascribe any good to thy self, nor attribute virtue to any man, but give all to *God* without whom no man hath any thing.

I have given *all*, and *I* will have *all* returned to *me* again. (1 *Cor.* 4.) and with great severity require a grateful acknowledgment.

3. THIS

3. THIS is truth, by which vain glory is put to flight.

And where *heavenly grace*, and *true charity* enter, there shall abide no envy, nor grudging of heart, nor no place be left for self-love.

For, *divine charity* overcomes all, and dilates all the forces of the soul.

If thou beest truly wise thou wilt rejoyce, and hope in none but *me. Matt. 19.*

For, *None is good but only God, Luke. 18. Who is to be praised above all, and in all to be blessed, for ever and ever. Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

*That, despising the world, it is sweet
to serve God.*

I. **N**OW I will speak again, ô
my *Lord*, and will not be
silent.

I will say, in the hearing of my
Lord God, and King that is on
high;

O, How great is the multitude of
thy sweetness O *Lord*, which thou
hast laid up for those that fear thee,
Psal. 13. But what art thou to those
that love thee? what to those that
serve thee with all their heart?

Unspeakable indeed is the sweet-
ness of thy contemplation, which
thou bestow'st on those that love
thee.

In this, most of all, hast thou
shewed me the sweetness of thy love,
that,

that, when I had no Being, *thou* didst make me; and when I strayed far from *thee*, *thou* didst bring me back again, that I might serve *thee*, and hast commanded me to love *thee*.
Gen. 1. Psal. 118.

2. O Fountain of everlasting love, what shall I say of thee?

How can I forget *thee*, *who* hast vouchsafed to remember me, even when I withered away and perished.

Thou hast used mercy to thy servant above all hope; and, beyond all desert, hast vouchsafed me *thy* favour and friendship.

What shall I return to *thee* for this *grace*? for it is not granted to all, To forsake all, to renounce the world, and lead a *Monastical* life.

Is it much that I serve thee, whom all creatures are bound to serve? Judith 16.

It ought not to seem much to me

to

to serve *thee* ; but rather this seems wonderful to me that thou hast vouchsafed to admit into *thy* service so poor and unworthy a wretch ; and to associate him to *thy* beloved servants.

3. BEHOLD, all is *thine* that I have, and do serve *thee* withall ; and yet in truth *thou* rather serveest me ; than I *thee*.

Behold ! Heaven and Earth, which thou hast created for the service of man ; are ready at *thy* beck, and do daily perform what *thou* hast commanded.

And this is but little ; for *thou* hast moreover created and appointed the Angels for the service of man. *Heb. 1. 1 Cor. 4.*

But, which is far above all, *Thou thy self* hast vouchsafed to serve man, and promised to give *thy self* to him. *Psal. 50.*

4. WHAT

4. WHAT shall I give *thee* for all these thousands of benefits?

O that I could serve *thee*, all the days of my life!

O that I were able at least one day to serve *thee* worthily.

Thou art indeed worthy of all service, of all honour, and of everlasting praise.

Thou art truly my *Lord*, and I *thy* poor servant; who am bound to serve *thee* with all my forces, and never grow weary of praising *thee*.

This is my wish, this is my desire, and whatsoever is wanting in me, vouchsafe to supply it, I beseech *thee*.

5. IT is a great honour, and a great glory to serve *thee*, and to despise all things for *thee*.

For they shall receive great *grace*, who willingly subject themselves to *thy* holy service.

They

They shall find the most sweet comfort of the *Holy Ghost*, who renounce all carnal delights for *thy love*.

They shall obtain great freedom of mind, who for *thy name* enter into the narrow way, and neglect all care of the world.

6. O sweet and delightful service of *God*, by which man is made *truly free, and holy!*

O sacred state of religious bondage, which makes man equal to Angels, pleasing to *God*, terrible to the Devil, and commendable to all faithful people! *Matt. 11. Joh. 13.*

O service always to be embraced, and always to be wished for, by which the greatest good is obtained, and that joy acquired which shall never end.

CHAP. XI.

That the desires of our heart are to be examined, and moderated.

I. SON, thou must learn many things which thou hast not yet well learned. What are those, Lord? *Psal. 107.*

That thou frame thy desire wholly according to *My* pleasure, and be no *lover* of thy self, but a diligent *lover* and *follower* of *My Will*. *Mat. 6.*

Thy desires do oftentimes stir thee up, and violently drive thee, but consider, whether thou art moved rather for *my honour*, than thy own profit.

If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content with whatsoever *I* shall ordain.

But if there lurk any self-inclination in thee, behold this is it that hinders and weighs thee down!

2. BEWARE.

2. BEWARE therefore, thou rely not too much on any desire that comes to thy mind, before thou hast consulted with *me*, lest perhaps it repent thee afterwards; and that dislike thee which before pleased thee, and which thou didst earnestly desire as the best.

For, every affection which seems good, is not presently to be followed, nor every contrary affection to be rejected.

It is expedient sometimes to use a restraint even in good desires, and endeavours, lest through importunity thou shouldst incur distraction of mind, or by ill example become a scandal to others, or else being opposed by others, suddenly become troubled, and fall.

3. SOMETIMES notwithstanding we must use violence, and manfully.

ly resist the sensual appetite, and not regard what the flesh would, or would not; but rather labour that even by force it become subject to the *Spirit*.

And it is so long to be chastized, and kept under servitude, until it readily obey in all things, and learn to be content with little, and to be pleased with ordinary things, and not to murmur at any inconvenience. *Matt. 11. Rom. 8. 2 Cor. 4. 2 Cor. 10. 1 Cor. 9.*

CHAP. XII.

Of the effect of Patience, and strife against Concupiscence.

I. **O** LORD GOD, Patience, as I perceive, is very necessary for me; since many adversities do happen, in this life. *Heb. 10.*

For,

For, howsoever I dispose of my *peace*, my life cannot be without war, and affliction. *Job. 7.*

So it is, son.

And my Will, is not that thou seek that *peace* which is void of temptations, or that feels no contrarieties:

But, then conceive thou hast found *peace*, when thou shalt be exercised with sundry tribulations, and tryed with many adversities. *James. 1.*

2. IF thou saist, Thou art not able to suffer much, how wilt thou then endure the fire of Purgatory?

Of two evils, the least is always to be chosen.

That thou mayst therefore avoid everlasting punishment in the world to come, endeavour to suffer patiently for *God* the evils of this.

Dost thou think that men of this world,

world, suffer little or nothing?

Thou shalt not find it so, though thou seek out those that live in greatest delicacies.

But they have (sayst thou) many delights, and follow their own wills, and therefore make small account of their tribulations.

Be it so that they have whatsoever they will: but, How long, dost thou think, it will last?

3. BEHOLD, All those who abound in this world, shall vanish away like smoke, and there shall be no memory of their past joys.

Yea, even also whilst they live, they rest not in them without grief, irksomness, and fear:

For, the very same thing in which they delight, doth oftentimes cause them sorrow and affliction.

It is but justice that they who inordinately seek, and follow pleasures,

tures, should not obtain them without bitterness, and confusion.

4. O, How-short, how-deceptful, how inordinate, and filthy art those pleasures!

Yet, through drunkenness, and blindness, men understand it not; but, like dumb beasts, for a little pleasure of a corruptible life, they incur the eternal death of their souls. *Eccl.* 18.

Do not therefore, my son, run after thy concupiscences, but forsake thine own will.

Delight in our Lord, and He will grant thee the petitions of thy heart. *Psal.* 36.

5. FOR, If thou wilt indeed be *truly* delighted, and more abundantly comforted by *me*; behold, In the contempt of all worldly things, and in cutting off all base delights,

delights, shall be thy blessing, and abundant comfort shall be given thee.

And so much the more as thou withdraw'st thy self from all solace of creatures, so much the sweeter and more powerful consolations shalt thou find in *me*.

But thou shalt not at first attain unto them, without a certain grief, and labour of strife.

The old custom will make resistance, but by a better custom it shall be overcom'n.

The flesh will murmur, but by the fervour of the *spirit* it shall be quelled.

The old Serpent will sting and trouble thee; but, by prayer, he shall be put to flight, and through profitable labour his strong assault shall be repulsed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the obedience of an humble subject, according to the example of JESUS CHRIST.

I. **S**ON, whoſo endeavours to withdraw himſelf from obedience, withdraws himſelf from grace. *Matt. 16:*

And he that deſires private things, ſhall loſe the common.

If any one doth not freely, and willingly, ſubmit himſelf to his ſuperiour, it is a ſign that his fleſh is not perfectly obedient to him, but oftentimes rebels, and murmurs.

Learn therefore readily to ſubmit thy ſelf to thy ſuperiour, if thou deſireſt to ſubdue thine own fleſh.

For, The exterior enemy is ſooner overcome, if the interior be not out of order.

L

There

There is not a worse, nor a more troublesome enemy to the soul, than Thou to thy Self, not agreeing well with the *spirit*.

For, of necessity, thou must have a true contempt of thy self, if thou wilt prevail against flesh and blood.

2. BECAUSE thou yet lovest thy self too inordinately, thou art afraid to resign thy self over to the will of others. *Luke 20.*

But, What great matter is it, if thou, who art dust and nothing, submit'st thy self to man for God; when *I the Almighty, and highest Sovereign*, who created all things of nothing, have humbly submitted my self to man, for thee? *Joh. 1. 2.*

I became the most humble and abject of all men, that thou might'st overcome thy pride by my humiliation.

Learn to obey (thou, who art dust);

dust); learn to humble thy self, (thou who art earth and clay); and put thy self under the feet of all men.

Learn to break thy own will, and to yield thy self to all subjection.

3. TAKE courage against thy self, and suffer not pride to live in thee, but humble and submit thy self in such manner that every one may trample on thee, and tread thee under their feet, as dirt of the streets.

O vain man! What canst thou complain of? what canst thou answer (foul sinner) to them that reprove thee, who hast so many times offended *God*, and deserved hell?

But, *Mine* eye hath spared thee, because thy soul was precious in *my* sight; that thou mightest know *my* love, and always remain grateful for *my* benefits, and that thou

L 2

mightest

mightest give thy self continually to true subjection and humility, and mightest bear patiently all contempt.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the secret Judgments of God to be considered, lest we be extolled in our good deeds.

I. **T**HOU thunderest thy judgments over me, ô Lord, and shakest all my bones with fear and trembling; and my soul is sore afraid. Job. 15.

I stand amazed, and consider, because the heavens are not pure in thy sight. Job. 4.

If thou hast found wickedness in the Angels, and hast not pardoned them, What shall become of me?

Stars fell from heaven, Apoc. 18.

And

And do I presume who am but dust?

They whose works seemed laudible fell into the lowest hell, and those who have eaten the bread of Angels, (Psal. 77.) I have seen delighted with the husks of swine.

2. THERE is, therefore, no sanctity, if *thou*, ô Lord, withdraw thy hand.

No wisdom avails, if *Thou* cease to govern.

No strength helpeth, if *thou* leave to conserve.

No charity is secure, if *thou* dost not protect it.

No custody of our own is profitable, if *thy* holy watchfulness be not present.

For, if *thou* leave us, we sink, and perish.

But if *thou* dost visit us, we live, and are raised up.

We are unconstant, but by *Thee*

we are confirmed.

We grow cold, but by *Thee* we
we are inflamed.

3. O, How humbly, and basely,
ought I to think of my self?

If I seem to have any good, how
little ought I to esteem it?

O Lord, how profoundly ought
I to submit my self under the abyss
of thy judgments; where I find my
self to be *nothing else but nothing,*
and nothing.

O immense weight! O sea, that
can never be passed over, where I
find my self nothing! and wholly no-
thing.

Where then is the lurking-hole
of glory? where confidence, con-
ceived of merit?

All vain-glory is swallowed up in
the depth of *Thy* judgments, which
hang over me.

4. WHAT

4. *WHAT is all flesh in thy sight? shall clay glory in him that frames it? Ecclus. 23.*

How can he be puffed up with vain words, whose heart is truly subject to *God*? *Esay 29.*

All the world cannot puff him up, whom *Truth* hath subjected to its-self.

Neither shall he who hath settled his whole hope in *God*, be moved with the tongues of those that praise him.

For, behold, even all they that speak, are nothing; for, they shall pass away with the sound of their words:

But, The Truth of the Lord remaineth for ever, Psal. 116.

CHAP. XV.

What we ought to do and say, in every thing we desire.

I. SON, say this in every thing :
O Lord, if it be pleasing to Thee, let it be done in this sort.

Lord, If it be to thine honour, let it be done in thy Name, James 3.

Lord, If thou seest, and approvest it to be expedient and profitable for me, then grant that I may use it to thine honour.

But, If *thou* knowest, it will be hurtful for me; and not conducing to the health of my soul, take from me such a desire.

For, every Desire is not from the *Holy Ghost*, though it seem to man right and good.

It is hard to judg *truly*, whether a good *spirit*, or the contrary, drives thee

thee to desire this, or that ; or whether thou art moved to it by thine own *spirit*.

Many are deceived in the end, who at first seemed to be led by a good spirit.

2. WHAT-soever , therefore , thou wouldst desire, or beg ; let it always be desired with the fear of *God*, and humility of heart , and, above all, with resignation of thy self, thou art to commit all to *Me*, and say :

O *Lord* , thou knowest what is best : Do this or that, as *thou* pleasest.

Give what *thou* wilt, how much *thou* wilt, and when *thou* wilt.

Do with me as *thou* knowest, and as best pleaseth *thee*, and is most for *thine honour*.

Put me where *thou* wilt, and freely dispose of me in all things.

I am in thine hand, turn and wind me about as thou pleatest.

Behold, I am *thy* servant ready to all things; for, I desire not to live to my-self, but to *Thee*.

I pray God, it may be perfectly, and worthily.

A Prayer for the fulfilling of the Will of God.

3. GRANT *me thy Grace, most merciful JESUS, that IT may be with me, and labour with me, and persevere with me to the end, Wisd. 9.*

Grant me always to will and desire that which is most acceptable to *Thee*, and what best pleaseth *Thee*.

Let *thy* will be mine., and let mine ever follow *Thine*, and agree perfectly with it.

Let my *will* and *will* be all one with *Thine*, and let me not be able to will, or refuse any thing, but what

what thou willest, and rejectest.

Grant that I may die to all that is in the world; and love, for *thy* sake, to be contemned, and not to be known in this world.

Grant that above all things that can be desired, I may rest in *thee*, and bring my heart to enjoy peace in *thee*.

Thou art the true peace of the heart, *Thou* art the only rest: out of *thee* all things are troublesome, and unquiet.

In peace, (in the self-same that is in Thee, the one Sovereign and eternal good) *I will sleep and rest.*
Psal. 4.

CHAP. XVI.

*That true comfort is to be sought in
God a'one.*

1. **W**HAT-soever I can desire,
or imagine for my com-
fort, I expect not in this life, but
hereafter.

For, If I alone should have all the
comforts of the world, and might
enjoy all the riches of it ; it is cer-
tain, they cannot last long. *Mat. 16.*

Wherefore thou canst not, ô my
soul ; be fully comforted, nor per-
fectly delighted, but in *God*, the
comforter of the poor, and the re-
ceiver of the humble.

Expect a little while, ô my soul ;
expect the divine promise ; and thou
shalt have abundance of all good
things in heaven.

If thou dost too-inordinately de-
fire

fire these present things, thou shalt lose those that are heavenly and eternal.

Use temporal, and *desire* eternal things.

Thou canst not be satiated with any temporal good, because thou art not created to enjoy them.

2. ALTHOUGH thou shouldst enjoy all that is created, yet cannot that make thee happy, or blessed.

But in *God*, who created all things doth thy blessedness and happiness consist; not, such as is seen, and praised by the foolish lovers of this world, but such as the good faithful servants of CHRIST expect, and of which the *spiritual*, and pure of heart, whose conversation is in heaven, have sometimes a fore-taste.

Vain, and short, is all humane solace; blessed and *true*, is that which is received *inwardly* through *truth*.

A

A devout man carrieth every where about with him his Comforter JESUS; and saith unto him; Be present unto me, *Lord JESUS*, at all times, and in all places.

Let this be my consolation, To be alwayes willing to want all humane comfort.

And, if thy comfort be wanting, let *thy* will, and good liking of it, be to me as the greatest comfort.

For, Thou wilt not be angry always, neither wilt thou threaten for ever, Psal. 102.

CHAP. XVII.

That we ought to cast all our Care upon God.

I. **S**ON, Suffer me to do what I will; I know what is fittest for thee.

Thou

Thou judgest in many things as humane affection perswades thee.

It is true, Lord, as thou sayest, *Thy* care over me is greater, than all the care I can take of my self.

For, he stands at too great a hazard, who casts not his whole care on *Thee*.

Lord, as long as my will remains right, and firm in *Thee*, do with me whatsoever it shall please *thee*, for, it cannot but be good, whatsoever *thou* dost with me.

2. If *thou* wilt have me to be in darkness, be *thou* blessed:

If *thou* wilt have me to be light, be *thou* again blessed.

If *thou* dost vouchsafe to comfort me, be *thou* blessed; and, if *thou* wilt have me afflicted, be *thou* equally ever blessed.

Son, in this state must thou stand, if thou desirest to walk with me.

Thou

Thou must be as ready to suffer, as to rejoyce; thou must be as willing to be poor and needy, as plentiful and rich.

3. LORD, I will suffer willingly for *thee*, whatsoever thy pleasure is should befall me.

I will receive indifferently from Thy hand good and evil, sweet and bitter, joyful and sorrowful; *and will give thee thanks for all that happens to me*: keep me from all sin, and I will fear neither death nor hell. *Psal. 22.*

As-long as *thou* dost not cast me from *thee* for ever, nor blot me out of the book of life, what tribulation soever shall befall me, shall not hurt me.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

That temporal miseries are to be borne patiently, according to the example of JESUS CHRIST.

I. SON, I descended from heaven for thy salvation. *John. 3.*

I took upon *me* thy miseries, not of necessity but drawn to it by charity, that thou mightst learn to bear temporal miseries patiently, and willingly. *Esay. 53. Luke. 2.*

For, from the hour of *my* birth untill *my* death on the Cross, I was not without suffering.

I suffered great want of temporal things.

I heard frequently many complaints against *me*.

I meekly sustained contempts, & confusions.

For benefits, I received ingratitude;

tude; for miracles, blasphemies; for doctrine, reprehensions.

2. LORD, since *thou* wert patient in *thy* life-time, in this chiefly fulfilling the commandment of *thy Father*; it is just, that I, a most miserable sinner, should, according to *thy will*, patiently behave myself; and, for my own salvation, bear the burthen of this corruptible life, as long as *thou* pleasest. *Joh. 5.*

For, Though this present-life be burthenesome; yet notwithstanding now by *thy grace*, it is made very meritorious; and, by thy example, and footsteps of thy Saints, more plain, and tolerable to the weak:

Yea, much more comfortable also, than it was in times past in the old Law; when the gate of heaven was shut, and the way thither seemed also darker; when so few
took

took care to seek after the kingdom of heaven.

Neither could they who were then just, and to be saved, enter into *thy* heavenly Kingdom, before *thy* Passion, and the debt of *thy* sacred Death was discharged.

3. O, How great thanks am I bound to give *thee*, Who hast vouchsafed to shew unto me, and all faithful souls, a right and good way to *thy* everlasting Kingdom! For, *thy* life is our Way, and by holy patience we walk to *thee*, who art our Crown.

If *thou* hadst not gon before, and taught us, Who would have taken care to follow?

Alas, How many would stay behind, and remain far off, if they saw not *thy* excellent Example?

Behold, we are yet cold; though we have heard of so many of *thy* wonders.

wonders and documents : What would become of us, if we had not so great light to follow thee?

CHAP. XIX.

Of suffering injuries patiently: Who is proved to be truly Patient.

I. **W**HAT is that thou say'st, son? Cease to complain, considering my Passion, and that of other Saints.

Thou hast not yet resisted to the shedding of blood. *Heb. 12.*

It is but little thou sufferest in comparison of them who have suffered so much, been so strangely tempted, so grievously afflicted, so many ways tryed and exercised. *Heb. 11.*

Thou oughtst therefore to call to mind the heavy sufferings of others,

thers, that thou mayst the more easily bear thy little ones.

And if they seem not little to thee, take heed thy impatience be not the cause thereof.

Put, whether they be great or small, endeavour to bear them all patiently.

2. THE better thou disposeth thy self to suffer, so much more wisely thou dost, and so much more dost thou merit.

And thou wilt bear it more easily, if thy mind be diligently prepared, and thou accustomed thereunto.

Say not, I cannot take these things from such a man; and, these kind of things are not to be suffered by me; for, he hath done me great wrong, and upbraided me with things I never thought on; but, from another, I will willingly suffer,

fer, as I shall see cause of suffering.

Such a thought is foolish, which considers not the virtue of patience, nor by whom it shall be crowned, but rather weighs the persons, and injuries offered.

3. HE is not truly patient, who will suffer no more than he thinks good, and from whom he pleaseth.

He that is firmly patient, minds not by whom he is exercised whether by his Prelate, or by some of his Equals, or by his Inferiours; whether by a good, and holy man, or by a perverse and unworthy person.

But he takes all indifferently, and thankfully, as from the hand of God, how much soever, or how often soever any adversity happens unto him, and esteems it a great gain.

Because nothing how little soever,

ver, so it be suffered for God, can be without merit in his sight.

4. BE thou therefore always prepared for the fight, if thou wilt have the victory.

Without a combat thou canst not attain the Crown of patience.

If thou wilt not suffer, thou refuseth to be crowned.

But, if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently.

Without labour, there is no coming to rest; nor can the victory be obtained, without fighting.

Lord, make that possible to me by *grace*, which seems impossible to me by nature.

Thou knowest, I can suffer but little, and that I am quickly dejected with a small adversity;

Let all exercise of tribulation, and adversity be made amiable, and desirable

dear to me for thy name's sake.

For, To suffer, and to be vexed
for Thee, is very healthful to my
soul.

CHAP. XX.

*Of the Confession of our infirmities,
and the miseries of this life.*

1. **I** Will confess against my self
mine injustice, I will confess
to thee, O Lord, mine infirmity,
Psal. 31.

It is oftentimes a small matter that
dejects and grieves me.

I purpose to do courageously;
but, when a small temptation comes,
it brings me to great streights.

It is sometimes a very trifle, from
which great temptation doth pro-
ceed.

And when I think my self some-
what

what safe, and do least expect it;
I find my self overcome, sometimes,
with a small blast.

2. BEHOLD, therefore, ô Lord,
my unworthiness and frailty, every
way known to *thee*.

Have mercy on me, and deliver
me out of the mire, that I stick not
fast therein. *Psal.* 24.

Let me not remain dejected for
ever. *Psal.* 68.

This is that which often beats me
back, and confounds me in *thy* sight,
because I am so subject to fall, and
weak in resisting my passions.

And, though I do not altogether
consent, yet their assaults are
troublesome, and grievous to me;
and it is very tedious, To live thus
in daily strife.

My infirmity is hereby made
known unto me, since evil fancies
do alwayes much more easily rush

M

in

in upon me, than they can be cast out again.

3. *O most mighty God of Israel,* zealous lover of faithful souls, behold the labour and sorrow of thy servant, and assist me in all whatsoever I undertake.

Strengthen me with heavenly power, lest the old man, miserable flesh, not yet subject to the spirit, prevail and get the upper hand; against which we must fight, as long as we breathe in this miserable life.

Alas! What kind of life is this, where tribulations and miseries are never wanting? where all things are full of snares and enemies?

For, One tribulation or temptation passeth, and another cometh; yea, during the first conflict many others come one upon another, and unexpected.

4. AND,

4. AND, how can a life be loved that hath so many afflictions, and is subject to so many calamities, and miseries?

How is it called a life, that begets so many deaths and plagues?

And yet it is loved, and many seek to delight themselves in it.

The World is often blamed that it is deceitful and vain; and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the desires of the flesh bear rule.

Some things draw us to love it, and others to contemn it.

The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, draw us to the love of the world, 1 Job. 2.

But the pains and miseries that attend it, breed a loathing of it.

5. BUT (alas)! wicked pleasure overcomes a Mind given to the world, and such an one esteems the

pleasing of her senses a delight, because she hath neither seen nor tasted the sweetness of *God*, nor the *inward* delight of virtue.

But they who perfectly condemn the world, and endeavour to live to *God* under holy discipline, are not ignorant of the divine sweetness that is promised to the true forsakers of the world, and discern clearly how grievously the world errs, and how many ways it is deceived.

CHAP. XXI.

That we are to rest in God above all goods and gifts.

I. **O** MY soul? Above all things, and in all things, do thou ever rest in *God*; for, He is the *eternal Rest* of the Saints.

Grant me, O most sweet and loving

ving JESUS, to rest in *thee* above all creatures.

Above all health and beauty ; above all glory and honour ; above all power and dignity ; above all knowledge and subtilty ; above all riches and arts ; above all joy and gladness ; above all fame and praise ; above all sweetness and comfort ; above all hope and promise ; above all merit and desire ; above all gifts and rewards , that thou canst give and impart ; above all joy and jubilation that a humane mind can conceive and feel : lastly, above Angels and Arch-Angels ; and above all the heavenly host ; above all things visible and invisible ; and above all that Thou art not (my God.)

2. FOR thou , O my *Lord God*, art good above all goods ; *Thou alone*, most powerful ; *Thou alone*,

M 3

most

most full and sufficient ; *Thou* alone, most sweet and comfortable ; *Thou* alone , most beautiful and loving ; *Thou* alone, most noble and glorious above all things : in whom all good things together are, have been, and ever shall be, most perfectly.

And therefore, whatsoever *Thou* bestowest on me besides *Thy self*, or revealest of *Thy self*, or promist whilest *thou* art not seen , nor fully obtained ; is too little and insufficient:

Because indeed, my heart cannot truly rest, nor be fully contented , unless it rest in *Thee*, and transcend all gifts, and creatures.

3. O my most beloved Spouse , CHRIST JESUS, the most *pure Lover* ; Lord of all creatures, Who will give me wings of true liberty to fly and rest in *thee* ?

O, when shall it be fully granted
me

me, to attend to my self, and see how sweet *thou my Lord God art.* Psal. 45.

When shall I fully recollect my self in *thee*, that through *thy love* I may not feel my self, but *thee* alone, above all sense, and manner, in a manner not known unto all.

But now I frequently mourn, and bear my misfortunes with grief; because many evils happen in this vale of misery, which do often trouble, grieve, and darken me; many times hinder and distract me; allure and intangle me, that I cannot have free access to *thee*, and enjoy thy sweet embracements, ready for pious and blessed souls at all times. *Dan.* 13.

Let my sighs, and manifold desolations on earth moove *thee*.

4. O JESU, splendour of eternal glory, the comfort of a pilgrim-soul; before *thee* my tongue is with-

M 4

out

out voice, and my silence speaks to *thee*.

How long doth my *Lord* delay to come?

Let *him* come to me *his* poor servant, and make me glad.

Let *him* stretch forth his hand, and deliver me from all anguish.

Come, come; for, without *thee* I cannot have one joyful day.

For *thou* art my joy, and, without thee, my table is empty.

I am a wretched creature, and in a manner imprisoned and loaded with fetters, until *thou* comfort me with the sight of *thy* presence, and give me liberty, and shew me a favourable countenance.

5. LET others seek what they please instead of *thee*, but for me, nothing doth, or shall delight me, but *thou* my *Lord God*, my hope and everlasting health.

I will not hold my peace, nor cease to pray, until *thy* grace return, and *thou* speak to me *interiourly*, and say: *Lo, I am here! behold, I come to thee; because thou hast called upon me: thy tears, and the desires of thy soul, thy humiliation, and the contrition of thy heart, have inclined and brought me to thee.*

And I said, *Lord, I have called upon thee, and I desire to enjoy thee, being ready to forsake all things for thee.*

For, *Thou* didst first excite me to seek thee.

Blessed be *thou* therefore, *O Lord*, who hast shewed this goodness to *thy* servant, according to the multitude of *thy* mercies.

6. WHAT hath *thy* servant more to say before *thee*, but that he greatly humble himself in *thy* sight, al-

M 5

ways

wayes mindful of his own iniquity and baseness?

For, There is none like unto thee in all whatsoever is wonderful in heaven or earth: Thy words are good, thy judgments are true, and by thy providence all things are governed, Psal. 85.

Praise therefore and glory be unto thee, O wisdom of the eternal Father; let my tongue, my soul, and all creatures together bless and praise Thee.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the remembrance of the manifold Benefits of God.

I. **O** PEN my heart, O Lord, in thy Law; and teach me to walk in thy commandments.

Grant me to understand thy will, and to remember thy benefits as well

well in general as in particular, with great reverence, and diligent consideration, that hence-forward I may be able worthily to give *thee* thanks.

But I know and confess, that I am not able to give *thee* due thanks, for the favours which *thou* bestowest upon me : even in the least moment, I am less than the least of thy benefits; and, when I consider the excellency of *thy Majesty*, the greatness thereof makes my spirit to faint.

2. ALL that we have in our soul or body, and whatsoever we possess outwardly, or *inwardly*, naturally, or *spiritually*, are *thy* benefits; and do praise *thee* as bountiful, precious, and good, from whom we have received all that is good.

And although one hath received more, another less, notwithstanding

ing all are *thine*; and without *thee* even the least cannot be had.

He that hath received greater, cannot glory of his own desert; nor extol himself above others, nor insult over the lesser.

For he is greatest, and best that ascribes least unto himself; and is more humble, and devout in rendering thanks.

And he that esteems himself basest of all men, and judgeth himself most unworthy, is fittest to receive greatest blessings.

3. AND he that hath received fewer, ought not to be sorry, nor bear it impatiently, nor envy them that are enriched with greater store; but attend rather unto *Thee*; and chiefly praise *thy* goodness, for that *thou* bestowest *thy* gifts so bountifully, so freely, and so willingly without respect of persons.

ALL

All things proceed from *thee*, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised.

Thou knowst what is fit to be given to every one; and, why this man hath less and another more, is not ours to determine but *thine*, who dost weigh in just measure the deserts of every one.

4. WHEREFORE, my *Lord God*, I esteem it as a great benefit, not to have much, whereby outwardly, and before men, I might seem worthy of praise and glory.

So that he that considers his *own* poverty and baseness ought not to be grieved or sorrowful or troubled at it; but rather, to take great comfort, and to be glad:

For, That thou, *ô Lord*, hast chosen the poor and humble and despised of this world, for thy self, and for thy familiar and household friends.

friends (Psal.44. 1 Cor.1. 1 Thes. 2.) thy Apostles themselves are witnesses, *whom thou hast appointed princes over all the earth.*

And yet they lived without complaint in the world; so humble and mean to the eyes of men without all malice, and deceit, that they rejoyced to receive disgrace and contempt for *thy Name*, and, what the world abhors, they imbraced with great affection.

5. NOTHING therefore ought so to rejoyce him that loves *thee*, and acknowledgeth *Thy benefits*, as the accomplishment of *Thy will* in himself, and the pleasure of *Thy eternal appointment*; wherewith he ought to be so contented, and comforted, that he would as willingly be the least, as any would wish to be the greatest: and as peaceable, and content in the last, as in the first

first place, and as willing to be despised, and contemned, and to be of no esteem or account as to be preferred in honour and esteem, before all the world.

For, *Thy* will, and the *love* of *thine honour* ought to comfort him more, and to please him better, than all the benefits which he hath received, or can be given.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Four things which bring much peace.

I. SON, Now I will teach thee the way of *peace*, and *true liberty*.

Do, *Lord*, I beseech *thee*, as *thou* sayst; for, I shall be very glad to hear it.

*Endeavour, my son, to do rather
the*

the will of another, than thine own,
 Mat. 26.

Ever choose rather to have less than more.

Always seek the lowest place, and to be inferiour to every one.

Wish, and pray, that the will of God may be fulfilled in thee.

Behold, such a man enters into the limits of *peace*, and most *quiet rest!*

2. LORD, this *thy* short speech contains much perfection.

It is little in words, but full in sense, and abundant in fruit.

For, if it could be exactly kept by me, I should not be so easily troubled.

For, as often as I feel my self unquiet, and afflicted, I find I have strayed from this doctrine.

But, *Thou* who canst do all things, & ever lovest the good & profit of
 my

my soul, increase in me thy grace,
that I may fullfil thy word, and
perfect my own health.

A Prayer against evil Thoughts.

5. MY Lord God, be not far
from me; my God have regard to
help me: for, sundry thoughts have
risen up against me, and great fears
afflicting my soul. Psal. 7c.

How shall I pass through them
without hurt? how shall I break
them?

I (saith He) will go before thee,
and will humble the glorious of the
earth. Esay. 25.

I will open the doors of the prison,
and reveal unto thee hidden secrets.

Do, Lord, as thou sayst; and let
all evil thoughts flee from before thy
face.

This is my hope and my only com-
fort, To fly unto thee in all tribula-
tion;

tion; To trust in thee, To call on thee from my heart, and To expect patiently thy comfort.

A Prayer for the inlightening of the mind.

4. ENLIGHTEN me, good JESU, with the cleerness of inward light, and expel all darkness of my heart.

Repress the many wandring thoughts, and beat down the fury of the temptations which violently assault me.

Fight strongly for me and vanquish the evil beasts, that is, the alluring Concupiscences; that peace may be made in thy virtue, and abundance of praise in thy holy court, which is a pure Conscience.

Command the winds, and tempests, say unto the Sea, Be still, and to the North-wind, Blow not; and a great Calm shall ensue. Mat. 8. 5. SEND

5. SEND forth thy light; and thy truth that they may shine upon the earth; for, I am empty and unprofitable earth, until thou impartest thy light upon me. Psal. 42.

Pour out thy grace from above, wash my heart with heavenly dew; give water of devotion to wash the face of the earth, to bring forth good, and perfect fruits.

Lift up my mind, over-charged with the weight of sin, draw up my whole desire to heavenly Treasures, that having tasted the sweetness of heavenly Happiness, it may loath to think of earthly Vanities.

6. TAKE me violently to thee, and deliver me from all unstable comfort of creatures; for, no created thing can fully quiet and satisfy my desire.

Joyn me unto Thee, with an inseparable

separable bond of love; for, thou only fillest the mind of him that loves thee; and, without thee, all things are distastful.

CHAP. XXIIII.

Of flying curious inquiry into the life of others.

I. SON, Be not curious, trouble not thy self with idle cares. *Ecc. 3. 1 Tim. 5.*

What is this, or that, to thee? Do thou follow *me. Job. 21.*

For; What is it to thee, whether that man be such, or no, or whether this man do, or speak this or that?

Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt give account of thy self.

Behold I know every one, what he

he is, and do see all things that are under the Sun, and do understand how it is with every one, what he thinks, what he would, and at what his intention aimes.

All things therefore are to be committed unto *me*; But, do thou keep thy self in good peace, and suffer the unquiet to do as they will.

Whatsoever they shall have done or said, shall fall on themselves for they cannot deceive *me*.

2. **DESIRE** not too great fame in this world, *nor* to be known to many; nor to have the private love of men; for, these things breed distractions, and cause great darkness in the heart.

I would willingly utter *my* words, and reveal *my* secrets unto thee; if thou didst diligently observe my coming, and didst open the door of thy heart unto *me*. Be

Be careful and watch in prayer,
and humble thy self in all things.

CHAP. XXV.

*Wherein true peace of heart, and
true profit, doth consist.*

I. SON, I have said, *Peace I leave
to you, my peace I give unto you.
Not as the world giveth, do I give.*
Joh. 14.

All do desire *peace*, but all
care not for those things that ap-
pertain to *true peace*.

My peace is with the humble, and
meek of heart.

Thy *peace*, shall be in much pa-
tience.

If thou wilt hear *me*, and follow
my voice, thou mayst enjoy much
peace.

What then shall I do, Lord?

In

In every thing thou dost or sayst, attend unto thy self; and direct thy whole intention unto this; that thou mayest please me alone, and desire and seek nothing out of *Me*.

Judg nothing rashly of the sayings or doings of others, and do not intangle thy self with things that are not committed to thee: and doing this it may be thou shalt be seldom or little troubled.

2. BUT, Never to feel any trouble at all, nor to suffer any grief of heart, or body; is not the state of this life, but of everlasting *rest*.

Think not therefore, that thou hast found *true peace* if thou feelest no sorrow, nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversary; nor that it is perfect, if all things be done according to thy desire.

Neither do thou then esteem highly of thy self, or imagin thy
self

self to be especially beloved, if thou be in great devotion and sweetness; for, a true lover of virtue is not tryed in these things, nor doth the profit and perfection of man consist in having them.

3. WHEREIN then, Lord?

In offering thy self from the very bottom of thy heart to the *divine Will*, not seeking thine own interest, or commodity, either in great, or little, in time, or eternity.

So that with equal countenance thou mayst persist in thanksgiving both in prosperity and adversity, weighing all things in an equal balance.

If thou art of such courage, and so patient in hope, that when *inward* comfort is withdrawn from thee, thou preparest thy heart to suffer greater things, and not justifie thy self as though thou oughtest not to suffer.

suffer these and so great afflictions; but justifie *Me* in whatsoever I appoint, and praise *my* holy name; then thou walkest in the *true* and right way of *peace*, and thou shalt see my face again with great joy.

And if thou attain to the full contempt of thy self, then shalt thou enjoy as great abundance of *peace* as thy banishment may permit.

CHAP. XXVI.

*Of the excellency of a free mind;
which humble Prayer better de-
serves than Reading.*

I. **L**ORD, it is the work of a *perfect* man, never to slack his mind from the attentive thought of heavenly things, and to pass through many cares as it were without care; not faintingly, but with a certain priviledg of a *free* mind, that ad-
N heres

heres not to any creature by inordinate affection.

2. I beseech thee, most merciful *God*, preserve me from the cares of this life, lest I should be too much intangled thereby; and from the many necessities of the body, lest I should be enthralled by pleasure; and from all hinderances of the soul, lest broken with troubles I should be dejected and dismayed:

I mean not, from those things that all worldly vanity so greatly desires; but, from those miseries that, as punishments, weigh down, and hinder the soul of thy servant, with the general curse of mortality, that it cannot enter into liberty of spirit, so often as it would. *Rom. 7.*

3. O MY GOD, the unspeakable sweetness, make all carnal comfort bitter unto me, and whatever may draw

draw me from the love of everlasting happiness, and wickedly allure me to it self, with the force of a certain present delight.

Let not flesh and blood overcome me, O Lord; let not the world, and the short glory thereof deceive me; let not the Devil, and his subtle fraud, supplant me.

Give me power to resist, patience to suffer, and constancy to persevere. *Rom. 2.*

Give me, instead of all the comforts of the world, the most sweet *Unction of thy Spirit*; and, in lieu of carnal love, pour into my soul the *love of thy name*.

4. BEHOLD, meat, drink, cloathing, and other necessities for the maintenance of the body are burdensome unto a fervent *spirit*.

Grant me to affect such nourishments in due measure, and not to

be intangled with an over-great desire of them.

It is not lawful to renounce them wholly (for that, Nature is to be maintained): but, To desire superfluities; and those things that do rather delight and sustain, thy holy Law forbids.

For, otherwise, the flesh would rebell against the *Spirit*.

Herein, I beseech *thee*, let thy hand govern me, and teach me that I may not exceed.

CHAP. XXVII.

That private love most hinders from the chiefest Good.

I. **S**ON, thou oughtst to give all for all, and to retain nothing to thy self.

Know that the love of thy self
hurts.

hurts thee more than any thing in the world.

According to the affection thou bearest them, so doth every thing cleave unto thee, more or less.

If thy love be *pure*, simple, and well ordered; thou shalt be free from bondage.

Covet not that which thou mayst not have.

Desire not that which may hinder, and deprive thee of inward liberty.

It is a wonderful thing, that thou committest not thy self wholly unto Me from the bottom of thy heart, with all things that thou canst desire or have.

2. WHY dost thou consume thy self with vain grief? why tirest thou thy mind with needless cares?

Resign thy self to *my* good pleasure, and thou shalt feel no loss at all.

N 3

If

If thou seekest this or that, or wouldest be here and there to enjoy thine own commodity or pleasure; thou shalt never be quiet, nor free from trouble of mind.

For, in every thing, somewhat will be wanting; and in every place, there will be somewhat that will cross thee.

3. NOT every external thing therefore attained, and heaped together, helps thee: but it rather avails, if thou despise it, and dost root it out from thy heart; which thou must not understand onely of thy revenues and wealth, but of the desire of honour also, and vain praise: All which passeth away with this fading world.

The place avails little, if the *spirit* of fervour be wanting, neither shall that *peace* long continue which is sought abroad, if the state of thy heart

heart be destitute of a *true* foundation, that is, Unless thou persist in *me* thou mayst change, but not better thy self.

For, When occasion doth happen, thou shalt find that which thou soughtst to fly, and perhaps more.

*A Prayer for cleansing of the heart,
and obtaining of heavenly wisdom.*

4. CONFIRM me, Lord, with the grace of thy holy Spirit; give me power to strengthen my inward man, and to purge my heart from all unprofitable care and grief, Psal. 50. Eph. 3.

Grant that I be not drawn away with sundry desires of any thing, either little or great, but to consider all things how they are transitory, and do quickly fade, and that I my self do also pass away together with them. Matth. 6.

For nothing is permanent under the Sun, where all things are vanity and affliction of mind; O, how wise is he that so considers them. Eccl. 1. & 2.

5. GRANT me, O Lord, heavenly wisdom, that I may learn above all things to seek, and find thee; above all things to delight in thee: and to love thee, and to think of all created things, as they are according to the disposition of thy wisdom.

Grant me prudently to avoid him that flatters me; and to suffer patiently him that contradicts me.

It is great wisdom, not to be moved with every blast of words, nor to give ear to dangerous flattery: for, so we shall walk securely in the way we have begun.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Against the tongues of Slanders.

1. SON, be not grieved, if some think ill of thee, and speak what thou dost not willingly hear.

Thou oughtest to judg the worst of thy self, and to think no man weaker than thy self. 1 *Côr.* 4.

If thou walk according to the *spirit*, thou wilt not much esteem of flying words.

It is no small wisdom to be silent in time of evil, and inwardly to turn to *me*, and not to be troubled with the judgment of men.

2. LET not thy *peace* be in the tongues of men; for, whether they judg ill, or well, thou art nevertheless alwayes the same.

N 5

Where

Where is *true peace*, and *true glory*? Is it not in *me*?

And he who covets not to please, nor fears to displease men, shall enjoy much *peace*.

From inordinate love, and vain fear, ariseth all disquiet of heart, and distraction of the senses.

CHAP. XXIX.

How we ought to call upon God, and bless him, when tribulation draweth near.

I. **B**LESSED, O Lord, be thy name for ever, since it pleaseth thee, that this temptation, and tryall, should fall upon me. *Job. 1.*

I cannot flye it, but have need to flye to Thee, that Thou mayst help me, and turn it to my good.

Lord, I am now afflicted, and it
is

is not well with me, I am much troubled with this present passion.

And now (*beloved Father*) what shall I say? I am taken, *Lord*, in narrow streights; save me in this hour; yea, therefore I am fallen in to this hour, that thou mayst be glorified, when I shall be greatly humbled, and delivered by *thee*. *Matt.* 26.

Let it please *thee*, *Lord*, to deliver me; for, poor wretch that I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go without *thee*?

Grant patience, *O Lord*, this time also. *Psal.* 39.

Help me, *O Lord*, and then I will not fear how much I am oppressed.

2. AND now in this what shall I say? *Lord*, Thy will be done.

I have well deserved to be afflicted and grieved.

Surely, I ought to bear it, and I would

would to God I might bear it with patience, until the tempest be passed over, and it become calm.

But, *thy omnipotent hand* is able to take this temptation from me, and to assuage the violence thereof, that I sink not utterly under it; as, oftentimes heretofore, thou hast done unto me, *my Lord, my mercy.*
Matt. 6.

And how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easie is this change of *thy mighty hand* to Thee. *Psal. 76.*

CHAP. XXX.

Of craving the divine aid; and confidence of recovering grace.

I. **S**ON, *I am thy Lord*, who do use to give comfort in the day of tribulation.

Come.

Come unto Me when it is not well with thee. Nahum. i.

This is that which most of all hinders heavenly comfort, that thou art slow in turning thy self to prayer.

For, before thou dost earnestly recommend thy self to *me*, thou seekest many comforts, and delightest thy self in outward things. *Mat. i. i.*

And hence it comes, that all doth little profit thee, until thou consider that *I am he*, that deliver those that trust in *me*, and that out of *me* there is neither powerful help, nor profitable counsel, nor remedy that can continue.

But now, thou having recovered breath after the tempest, gather strength again in the light of *my mercies*; for, I am at hand, saith our Lord, to repair all, not onely intirely, but abundantly. *Matt. 23.*

2. Is there any thing hard to me? or am I like to him that promiseth, and performeth not? Jer. 32.

Where is thy faith? Be firm and constant.

Take courage, and be patient; comfort will be given thee in due time.

Expect me, expect: I will come and cure thee.

It is a temptation that vexeth thee, and a vain fear that frights thee.

What else doth the care of future incertainties bring thee, but sorrow upon sorrow?

Sufficient to the day are the evils thereof, Matth. 6.

It is a vain and unprofitable thing to be grieved or to rejoyce for future things that perhaps will never happen.

3. BUT

3. BUT it is incident to man, to be deluded with such imaginations, and a sign of little courage to be so easily drawn away by the suggestions of the enemy.

For he cares not so he may delude, and deceive thee, whether it be true or false, which he proposeth, whether he overthrow thee with the love of present, or the fear of future things.

Let not therefore thy heart be troubled, neither do thou fear: believe in *me*, and put thy trust in *my* mercy. *Psal.* 90.

When thou thinkst *I* am farthest from thee, oftentimes *I* am neereſt unto thee.

When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then oftentimes greatest gain of merit is at hand.

All is not lost when any thing falls out contrary to thee.

Thou

Thou must not judg according to that which thou feelest for the present; nor give thy self over to any grief from whence soever it comes, as though all hope of delivery were quite gone.

4. THINK not thy self wholly lost, although for a time *I* have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn thy desired comfort; for, this is the way to the Kingdom of heaven.

And without doubt, it is more expedient for thee, and the rest of *my* servants, that ye be exercised with many adversities; than that ye should have all things according to your desires.

I know the secret thoughts of thy heart, and that it is very expedient for thy souls health, that thou be left sometimes without any tast, or feeling of *spiritual* sweetness, lest perhaps.

perhaps thou shouldst be puffed up with good success, and shouldst please thy self in that which thou art not.

What *I* have given, *I* can take away, and restore it again when *I* please.

5. WHEN *I* give, it is *mine*; when *I* withdraw, *I* take not any thing that is thine: for, *every good and perfect gift is mine*, James I.

IF *I* send thee afflictions, or any cross whatsoever, repine not, nor be dismayed; *I* can quickly lift thee up again, and turn all thy sorrows into joy.

Nevertheless *I* am just, and greatly to be praised, when *I* do all this unto thee.

6. IF thou beest rightly wise, and truly considerest thy case, thou wouldst never yield so cowardly to

to grief for any adversity that befalls thee, but rather rejoyce, and give thanks.

Yea to account this thy only joy, that *I* do not spare thee in afflicting thee with sorrows.

As my Father hath loved me, I also love you, said *I* unto my beloved disciples. *Joh. 15.*

Whom certainly, I sent not to temporal joys, but to great conflicts; not to honours, but to contempt; not to idleness, but to labours; not to rest, but to bring forth much fruit in patience. My Son, remember these words.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the contempt of all creatures to find the Creator.

I. **M**Y LORD, I stand yet in need of great grace, if I must

must go so farr as that no man, or creature may hinder me.

For, as long as any thing holds me, I cannot fly freely to thee.

He desired to fly with great liberty that said, *Who will give me wings like a Dove, and I will fly and be at rest.* Psal. 54.

What thing more quiet than a simple eye; and what more free than he that desires nothing upon earth? *Matt. 6.*

Man ought therefore to ascend above all creatures, and perfectly to forsake himself, and to remain in excess of mind; and consider that, *Thou*, who art the maker of all things, hast nothing among creatures like unto *Thee*.

And unless a man be free from the affection of all creatures, he cannot with freedom of mind attend unto divine things.

And this is the cause there are so few

few contemplative men to be found; for that few can sequester themselves wholly from fading creatures.

2. MUCH *grace* is necessary to lift up a soul, and to carry it above it self.

And unless a man be lifted up in *Spirit*, and delivered from all creatures, and wholly united unto *God*, whatsoever he knows, and whatsoever he hath, is of little account.

Long shall he be little, and grovel in earthly baseness, that esteems any thing great, but the only *unmeasurable, and eternal Goodness*.

For, whatsoever is not *God*, is nothing; and ought to be accounted as nothing.

There is great difference between the wisdom of a spiritual illuminated devout man, and the knowledg of a learned studious Clerk.

Farr

Farr more noble is that learning which comes from above, from the divine influence, than that which is painfully got by the wit of man.

3. THERE are many that desire contemplation, but they endeavour not to exercise those things that are required thereunto.

It is a great hinderance that we rest in signes, and sensible things, and have little true mortification.

I know not what it is, nor by what spirit we are ledd, nor what we pretend who would be called *spiritual*; that we take so much pains, and so great care, for transitory base things, and scarce or seldom think of our own inward profit with full recollection of our senses.

4. ALAS, presently after a sleight recollection, we break forth, and weigh not our works with diligent examination. We

We mind not where our affections incline; nor bewail the impurity, & many faults, that are in our actions.

For, *All flesh had corrupted her way, Gen. 6, & 7. and therefore did that general flood ensue.*

Since therefore our inward affection is much corrupted, it must needs be, that, our actions, proceeding from them, be corrupted, as a sign of the want of inward rigour.

From a pure heart, proceeds the fruit of a good life.

5. WE ask, what such a one hath done, but consider not diligently how virtuous his actions are.

We inquire, whether he be strong, rich, beautiful, handsom, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer :

But how poor he is in *spirit*, how patient and meek, how devout and *spiritual*, is seldom spoken of.

Nature

Nature respects outward things;
Grace, turns her self to the *inward*
virtues.

Nature is often deceived, but
grace hath her trust in *God* to the
end she be not deceived.

CHAP. XXXII.

*Of the denyal of our selves, and for-
saking all our affections.*

I. SON, Thou canst not possess
perfect liberty, unless thou
wholy deny thy self.

All such as are lovers of them-
selves, are bound in fetters: they are
covetous, curious, wanderers, seek-
ers of ease, and not of those
things that appertain to JESUS
CHRIST; but oftentimes devising,
and framing that which will not
continue. *Matt. 16. & 19.*

For,

For, all shall perish that proceeds not from *God*.

Keep this short and compleat word [*Leave all, and thou shalt find all.*]

Leave thine inordinate desires, and thou shalt find rest.

—Consider this well ; and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all.

2. LORD, this is not one days work, nor childrens sport ; yea, in this short sentence, all the perfection of religious persons is included.

Son, thou must not go back, nor straitwayes be dejected when thou hearest the way of the *perfect* ; but rather, be stirred up to more worthy and noble attempts, or at least to conceive an earnest desire thereof.

I would it were so well with thee, and that thou wert come so far,

far, that thou wert no longer a lover of thy self, but didst stand meerly at *my* beck, and at his whom *I* have appointed a Father over thee; then thou shouldst exceedingly please *me*, and all thy life would pass away in joy and peace.

Thou hast yet many things to forsake, which unless thou wholly resign over unto *me*, thou shalt not attain to that thou desirest.

I counsel thee to buy of me purified gold, that thou mayst become rich, (Apoc. 3.) that is, heavenly wisdom, which treads under foot all base, and earthly things.

Set little by the wisdom of this world, and esteem not of the contentment of men, and thine own fancies.

3. I said, that thou shouldst buy the mean and base things, with the precious, and those that were of
O great

great esteem with men.

For, *true heavenly wisdom* seems very base, and of small account, and is scarce thought of by men; for that esteems not highly of it self, nor seeks to be magnified upon earth; which many praise from the teeth outward, but in their life they are from it: *yet is it the precious pearl which is hidden from many,* Matth. 13.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Of the inconstancy of our heart, and of directing of our final intentions to God.

1. **S**ON, Trust not to thy affections; that which now is, will quickly change into another. *Job 14.*

As long as thou livest, thou art
subject

subject to change, even against thy will.

So that now thou art merry, now sad; now quiet, anon troubled; now devout, now distracted; now diligent, now idle; now heavy, now light.

But he that is wise and well instructed in *spirit*, remains alwayes one in the midst of these changes, not heeding what he feels in himself, nor which way the wind of mutability blows, but that the whole intention of his mind, may tend as it ought to the most perfect and best end.

And so he may continue one and the self-same, without any change in the midst of so many sundry changes and chances; directing alwayes the sincere eye of his intention upon *Me*.

2. AND, how much purer the
O 2 eye

eye of the *intention* is (*Matt. 6.*) so much the more constantly doth he pass through the variety of many contrary storms.

But in many things the eye of a *sincere intention* waxeth blind; for, it quickly looks on some delightful object that happeneth.

And it is rare to find one wholly free from all blemish of self-seeking.

So the Jews, in time past, came into Bethany to Martha and Mary; not for JESUS alone, but to see Lazarus also. Joh. 11.

The eye of our *intention*, therefore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere, and pure; and to be directed unto *me*, neglecting the multitude, and variety of earthly objects.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

*That God is sweet above all things,
and in all things, to him that
loves Him.*

I. **B**EHOLD my God and All!
What would I have more,
and what can I desire more happy?

O sweet and comfortable word!
but to him that *loves the word*, not
the world, nor those things that
are in the world.

My God and All! Enough is said
to him that understands, and it is
pleasant to him that loves to repeat
it often.

For when *Thou* art present, all
things yield delight; but when *Thou*
art absent, all becomes irksome.

Thou givest quiet of heart, and
much *peace*, and pleasant joy.

Thou makest men think well of

O 3 all,

all, and praise *thee* in all things, neither can any thing please us long without *thee*.

But if it be pleasant and delightful, *thy grace* must be present; and it must be seasoned with the sweetness of *thy wisdom*.

2. WHAT can be distasteful to him, to whom *thou* art pleasing? and what can be pleasant to him, whom *thou* delightest not. *Rom. 6.*

But the wise of the world, who have their contentment in sensual things, cannot attain to *thy wisdom*; for, in the world is much vanity, and *in the flesh is death*.

But they that follow *thee* by the contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proved to be truly wise. 1 *Joh. 2.*

For they are changed from vanity to *truth*, from flesh to *spirit*.

To

To these God is sweet, and what good soever is found in creatures, they wholly refer unto the praise of their *Maker*.

Notwithstanding; great, yea very great is the difference between the sweetness of the *Creator*, and of the creature; of *eternity*, and of *time*; of *uncreated*, and created light.

3. O Everlasting *light*, surpassing all created lights, cast forth the beams of thy brightness from above, and pierce the most *inward* corners of my heart: purifie, rejoyce, clarify and quicken my *spirit*, with all the powers thereof; that I may cleave unto thee with excess of unspeakable joy.

O, When will that blessed, and desired hour come, that I may be filled with *thy* presence, and *Thou* mayest be unto me *all* in all things.

As-long as this is not granted me,

I shall not have full, or perfect joy.

Alas ! My old man yet lives in me, he is not wholly crucified, he is not perfectly dead. *Rom. 7.*

He doth yet covet strongly against the *spirit*, and moves civil warrs, and suffers not the Kingdom of my soul to be in *peace*.

But, *Thou* who rulest the powers of the Sea, and asswagest the motion of the waves, rise and help me.

Dissipate the people that desire warr, and destroy them in thy might, and let thy hand be glorified.

For, there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee my Lord God,
Psl. 68. 88, 89, 90.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXV.

*That there is no security from Tem-
tation in this life.*

I. S O N, There is no security in this life; as long as thou livest, thou shalt alwayes have need of spiritual armour. *Job 7. 1 Cor. 6.*

Thou livest amongst enemies, and art assauled on all sides.

If therefore thou defendest not thy self on every side; with the shield of patience, thou canst not be long unwounded.

Moreover, if thou fix not thy heart on *me* with a sincere will to suffer all things for *me*, thou canst not sustain the heat of this battel; nor get that victorious Crown, which they have that are in Glory.

Thou oughtst therefore manfully to go through all, and to use a

strong hand against whatsoever withstands thee.

For, *To him that overcomes Manna is given, Apoc. 2.* and to the negligent is left much misery.

2. IF thou seekest rest in this Life; how wilt thou then attain to everlasting rest?

Give not thy self to much ease; but, to much patience.

Seek *true peace*, not on earth, but in heaven; not in men, nor in any creature, but in *God* alone.

Thou oughtst for the love of *God* to undergo labours willingly, to endure griefs, temptations, vexations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, injuries, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts: these help to the attaining of virtue, these try a Novice of *Christ*, these merit a heavenly Crown.

I will give an everlasting reward for a short labour, and infinite glory for transitory confusion.

3. THINKS'T thou, that thou shalt have spiritual consolations alwayes at will?

My Saints had not so, but many afflictions, and sundry temptations, and many discomforts : all which they endured patiently, and trusted rather in God, than in themselves ; knowing that the sufferings of this time are not condign to the deserving of future glory. Rom. 8.

Wilt thou have that streightways, which many, after tears and great labours, have hardly obtained?

Expect the Coming of thy Lord, do manfully, be of good courage, fear not, do not fly ; but offer both body and soul for the glory of God.

I will reward thee in the most plentiful manner, and I will be with thee in all thy tribulation, Psal. 26.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Against the vain judgments of men..

1. **S**ON, Fix thy heart stedfastly on our Lord; and fear not the judgments of men, when thy conscience gives testimony of thy justice, and innocence.

It is a good and happy thing, to suffer in that sort; neither will it be burdensome to an humble mind, nor to him that trusts rather in God than in himself.

The most part of men are given to talk much, and therefore little heed is to be had of their words, neither is it possible to satisfy all.

Though the Apostle endeavour-
ed

ed to please all in our Lord, and made himself all unto all, yet he little regarded that he was judged by humane day. *1 Cor. 9. 2 Cor. 4. Col. 1.*

2. HE did for the edification, satisfaction, and health of others, as much as he could, and lay in him; yet, could he not hinder, but that he was judged and despised by others.

Therefore he committed all to God, that knows all, and defended himself with patience and humility against evil tongues, and such as thought vanities and lies, and spake what they listed.

Yet, sometimes notwithstanding he answered, lest the weak might have received scandal by his silence. *Acts 16. Phil. 2.*

3. WHO art thou that fearest a mortal

mortal man? To day he is, and to morrow doth not appear.

Fear *God*; and the terrour of men shall not trouble thee. *Mark 2.*

What harm can the words or injnries of any do thee? He rather hurts himself than thee, *neither can he avoid the judgment of God, be he what he will,* *Rom. 2.*

Set God before thine eyes, and contend not with complaining words. *1 Cor. 11.*

And if for the present, thou seemest to be trodden down, and to suffer shame and confusion, without desert; do not repine, and lessen thy crown by impatience: but rather lift up thine eyes to *Me* in heaven, *I* am able to deliver thee from all shame, and wrong; and to repay every one according to their works. *Heb. 12.*

C H A P. XXXVII.

Of a full and pure resignation of our selves, for the obtaining freedom of heart.

I. **S**ON, *Leave thy self, and thou shalt find Me, Matth. 16.*

Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy self, and thou shalt ever gain.

For, Greater *grace* shall alwayes be given thee, when thou dost perfectly resign thy self, and not turn back to take thy self again.

Lord, how often shall I resign my self, and wherein shall I forsake my self?

Always, and in every thing, as well in little as in great, I do except nothing, but do require that thou be as it were naked, and void of a'l things :

Otherwise, how canst thou be perfectly

perfectly *mine*, and *I* thine? unless both within, and without thou be free from all self-will.

And, how much the sooner thou dost this, so much the better thou shalt find thy self; and, how much the more fully and sincerely thou dost it, so much the more shalt thou please me, and so much the more shalt thou gain.

2. SOME there are, who resign themselves, but with some exceptions; for, they put not their whole trust in *God*, and therefore labour to provide for themselves.

Some also at the first do offer all, but afterwards being assaulted with temptations, return again to what they left; and therefore proceed not in the way of virtue.

These shall not attain to the *true liberty of a pure heart*, nor to the *grace of my divine familiarity*; unless

less they first make an entire resignation, and offer themselves a daily sacrifice to *Me*.

For, without this thou canst not obtain that *union* with *Me*, where-with my Saints enjoy *Me*.

3. I have often said unto thee, and now say again the same; *For-sake thy self, resign thy self, and thou shalt enjoy eternal peace.* Matt. 16.

Give *all for all*; seek nothing, require nothing; repose thy self purely, and with a full confidence in *Me*: and *I* will give *my self* unto thee; and darkness shall not overwhelm thee.

Let this be thy whole endeavour, let this be thy prayer, let this be thy desire, That, casting off all propriety, thou mayst all-naked, follow thy naked Saviour JESUS, and dying to thy self, mayst live eternally to *Me*.

Then

Then shall vain fancies, evil perturbations, and all superfluous cares fly away; then immoderate fear shall leave thee, and inordinate love shall die.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Of good Government in outward things; and, Of recourse to God in dangers.

I. **S**ON, Thou oughtest with all diligence to procure that in every place or action, or external business, thou be inwardly free, and master of thy self; and that all things be under thy disposition, and thou not subject to them; that thou mayst be Lord, and Master of thy actions, not a servant, or an hireling; but rather a freeman, and a true Hebrew, belonging to the lot, and freedom of the Sons of God, who

who put present things under their feet, and place their thoughts on that which is eternal; who look on transitory things with the-left eye, and, with the-right, behold the things of heaven; who suffer not themselves to be drawn to cleave unto them, but rather dispose, and use them, as they are ordained by *God*, and appointed by the Creator of all; Who hath left nothing in his creatures, without due order.

1. IF thou remain firm, and steadfast in all events, and dost not weigh by the outward appearances, nor with a carnal eye the things which thou seest, and hear'st; but presently on every occasion dost enter with *Moses* into the Tabernacle, to ask counsel of our *Lord*; thou shalt sometimes hear the divine, and celestial Oracle; and shalt return instructed of many

many things, both present, and future. *Exod.* 33.

Moses had always recourse to the Tabernacle, for the deciding of all doubts, and obscure questions, and fled to the help of *prayer* for remedy of the iniquity, and dangers of men. *Jos.* 9.

So oughtest thou in like manner to fly to the closet of thine heart, earnestly craving the *divine* help and succour.

For, the Scripture testifieth, that therefore was *Joshua*, and the Children of Israel deceived by the *Gibeonites*, because they consulted not first with *God*, but giving credit too lightly to fair words, were deluded with counterfeit piety.

CHAP. XXXIX.

That a man be not over-earnest in his affairs.

1. **S**ON, Always commit thy cause to *me*, *I* will dispose well of it in due time; expect *my* ordinances, and thou shalt find it will be for thy good.

Lord, I do most willingly commit all unto *thee*; for, my care can profit little.

O that I cleaved not too much to future events, but offer'd my self with all readiness of mind to *thy* divine pleasure.

2. **M**Y Son, often-times a man doth earnestly labour for that which he desires; and when he hath gotten it, he begins to be of another mind, and not to esteem so much of it

it, as he did before; for mans affections continue not long fixed on one thing but pass from one to another.

It is therefore a matter of great concernment, to forsake our selves even in the least things.

3. THE *true spiritual* profit of man consists in denying, and forsaking himself.

He that is *Resigned*, lives in great freedom, and security.

But the old Enemy, who always labours to withstand the servants of *God*, omits not at any time his wonted temptations, but day and night lies still in wait, to cast the unwary, if he can, into the snare of deceit.

1 *Pet.* 5.

Watch therefore and pray (saith our Lord) that ye enter not into temptation, Matt. 26.

CHAP. XL.

*That man hath no good of himself;
nor any thing, whereof he can
glory.*

I. **L**ORD, what is man that thou
art mindful of him, or the
son of man, that thou vouchsafest to
visit him, Psal. 6.

What hath man deserved that
thou shouldst give him *thy* grace?

Lord, what cause have I to com-
plain, if *thou* forsake me? or, what
have I justly to say against *thee*, if
thou dost not what I desire?

Surely, this I may truly think,
and say : *Lord I am nothing, I can
do nothing, I have nothing of my
self that is good* : but in all things
I fail, and am defective, and ever
tend to nothing.

And unless *thou* help me, and
dost

doſt *inwardly* inſtruct me, I become cold, and am diſſolved.

But thou, O Lord, art always the ſame, and endureſt for ever; always good, juſt, and holy; doing all things well, juſtly, and holily; and diſpoſing all things wiſely.

2. BUT I who am more inclined to fall than to go forwards, do never continue in one ſtate; for, ſeven different times are changed over me.

Yet, doth it ſoon turn to the better, when it pleaſeth *thee*; and when *thou* vouchſafeſt to ſtretch forth *thine* helping hand.

For, *Thou* alone canſt help me without the favour of man; and ſo ſtrengthen me, that my countenance ſhall be no more changed, but my heart ſhall be converted, and reſt in *thee* alone.

3. WHERE-

3. WHERE-fore, if I should once perfectly forsake all human comfort, either for the love of devotion, or for mine own necessity, which enforceth me to seek after *thee*, (for none else can comfort me); then might I well hope in *thy* grace, and rejoyce in the gift of new consolation.

4. THANKS be to Thee, from whence all proceeds as often as it goes well with me; but I am meer vanity, and nothing before thee, an unconstant, and weak man.

Whereof then can I glory? or why do I desire to be esteemed? Is it not for nothing? and this is most vain.

Truly, vain-glory is an evil plague, and very great vanity; because it draws from true glory, and robs the Soul of heavenly grace.

P

For,

For, whilst a man pleaseth himself, he displeaseth *thee*; whilst he gapes after the praise of men, he is deprived of true virtue.

5. But true glory, and holy exultation and joy, is, for a man to glory in *thee*, and not in himself; to rejoyce in *thy name*, and not in his own virtue; nor to delight in any creature, but for *thee*. *Abac. 3. Psal. 112.*

Praised be *thy* name, not mine; magnified be *thy* work, not mine: let *thy* holy name be for ever blessed, but to me let no part of mens praises be given. *Job. 5.*

Thou art my glory, thou art the joy of my heart; in thee will I glory and rejoyce all the day: but for my self, I will not joy but in mine infirmities.

6. LET the Jews seek the glory which

which one man gives to another, I will desire this which is from God alone.

For, all humane glory, all temporal honour, all worldly highness, compared to *thy* eternal glory, is vanity and folly.

O my truth, my mercy, my God most Blessed Trinity; to Thee alone be all praise, honour, virtue, and glory, for all eternity.

CHAP. XLI.

Of the contempt of all temporal honour.

I. SON, Trouble not thy self if thou seest others honoured, and advanced; and thy self contemned and debased.

Lift up thy heart unto *me* in heaven, and the contempt from earth-

ly men will not grieve thee.

Lord, we are blind, and quickly seduced with vanity.

If I look well into my self, I cannot say that any creature hath done me wrong, and therefore I cannot justly complain to *thee*.

2. BUT, because I have often and grievously sinned against *thee*, all creatures do justly take arms against me; for, shame and contempt is due unto me, but unto *thee* praise, honour, and glory.

And unless I do so prepare my self, that I be willing, and do rejoyce to be despised, and forsaken of all creatures, and to be esteemed nothing at all; I cannot obtain *internal* strength, and *peace*, nor be spiritually enlightned, nor wholly united unto *thee*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLII.

That our Peace is not to placed in man.

I. SON, If the *peace* thou hast with any, be grounded on the opinion which thou hast of him, or on the contentment thou takest in his company; thou shalt ever be unconstant, and subject to disquiet.

But, If thou have recourse to the *everliving and eternal Truth*; a friend, going from thee, or dying, shall not grieve thee.

The love of thy friend ought to rest in *me*, and for *me*; he is to be loved, whoever he be, thou thinkest well of, and is very dear to thee in this life.

No friendship can avail or continue without me, neither is the love *true* and *pure*, which they

have whose hearts are not joyned together by *me*.

Thou oughtst to be so dead to such affections of beloved friends, that (for as much as appertains to thee) thou shouldst wish to be without all humane society.

Man approacheth so much the neerer unto *God*, how much the further off he departs from earthly comfort; also, he ascends so much the higher into *God*, by how much the lower he descends into himself, and how much the baser he is in his own conceit.

2. BUT, he that attributes any good unto himself, hinders the coming of *Gods grace* unto him.

For, the grace of the holy Ghost, ever seeks an humble heart. 1 Pet. 5.

If thou couldst perfectly annihilate thy self, and purge thy self of all created love, then great abundance

Of the Imitation of Christ. 295
dance of *my* grace should flow in
thee.

When thou castest thine eyes on
creatures, the sight of thy *Creatour*
is taken from thee.

Learn to overcome thy self in all
things, for the love of thy *Creatour*
and then thou shalt be able to attain
to heavenly knowledg.

How little soever it be, if it be
inordinately loved, and regarded,
it defiles the soul, and hinders the
enjoying of the chiefest Good.

CHAP. XLIII.

Against vain and secular Knowledg.

I. **S**ON, Let not the fair speech-
es, and subtile sayings of men
move thee; for, *The Kingdom of*
God consists not in words, but in
virtue. 1 Cor. 4.

P 4

Observe

Observe well the words which I speak; for, they inflame the heart, and enlighten the mind; induce compunction, and bring sundry comforts.

Never read to shew thy self learned, or wise; but labour to mortifie thy vices, for that will profit thee more than the knowledg of hard and difficult questions.

2. WHEN thou shalt have read, and known many things; thou oughtest alwayes to return to one beginning.

I am he that teacheth man all knowledg, and do give little ones a more clear understanding than can be taught by man.

He therefore to whom I speak shall quickly be wise, and shall profit much in *spirit*.

Wo be to them that enquire many curious things, and little desire
to

to know the way how to serve me.

The time will come when the Master of Masters shall appear, **CHRIST the Lord of Angels**, to hear the lessons of all; that is, to examine the consciences of every one.

And then he will search Jerusalem with a Candle, and the hidden things of darkness shall be laid open, and the Arguments of tongues shall be silent. Soph. I.

2. I am he that in an instant do raise up the humble mind, to understand more reasons of the *everlasting truth*, than can be got by ten years study in Schools.

I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without contention of arguments, without ambition of honour.

I am he that teacheth to despise earthly things, to loath things present; to seek the everlasting, to de-

light in eternal things; to fly honours, to suffer scandals, to place all hope in *me*, to desire nothing out of *me*, and, above all things, *fervently to love me*.

4. FOR, a certain person by *loving me* intirely, learned divine things, spake wonders; he profited more in forsaking all things, than in studying subtilties.

To some *I* speak ordinary things, to others things more particular; to some *I* appear sweetly by signs and figures, but to some *I* reveal mysteries with much light.

The voice of books is one, but it teacheth not all men alike.

For, *I* am the *internal Teacher*, *I* am the *Truth*, the searcher of the heart, the understander of thoughts, the promoter of good works, distributing to every one as *I* judge expedient.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIV.

Of not drawing outward things to our selves.

I. SON, In many things thou oughtst to be ignorant, and esteem thy self as dead upon earth, and as one to whom the world is crucified.

Thou must also pass over many things with a deaf ear, and rather think of that which appertains to thy peace. *Gal. 6.*

It is more profitable to turn thine eyes from the sight of unpleasing things, and to leave to every one his own opinion, than to strive with contentious discourses.

If thou standst well with *God*, and considerest *his* judgments, thou shalt the more easily yield to the will of others.

2. O LORD, To what an estate are we come! We greatly bewail a temporal loss, and for a little gain, we toyl and spare no labour; and the spiritual damage of our souls is forgotten, and hardly ever called to mind.

That which little or nothing profits, is alwayes remembred; that which is chiefly necessary, is negligently passed over: because, mans nature carrieth him to outward things; and unless he quickly return unto himself, he lieth drowned in them with delight.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLV.

That, Credit is not to be given to all men, and how prone man is to offend in words.

1. **H**ELP me, Lord, in my tribulation, for vain is the help of man, Psal. 59.

How often have I been deceived, finding want of faith where I thought it sure?

And how often have I found faith where I least expected it?

It is vain therefore to trust in men; but the safety of the just is in thee, O Lord.

Blessed be thou, O my God, in all things that befall us.

We are weak, and inconstant, quickly deceived, and soon changed.
Prov. 1c.

2. WHO.

2. WHO is he that is able to keep himself so warily, that he never fall into any doubt, or deceit?

But he that trusts in *thee*, O Lord, and seeks thee with a *simple heart*, doth not easily fall : and if he fall into any tribulation, be he never so much enthralled ; yet he shall quickly be delivered, or comforted by *thee*.

For *thou* wilt not forsake him forever, that trusts in *thee*.

The friend is rare to be found, that continues faithful in his friend's distress ;

But *thou*, O Lord, *thou art faithful at all times*, and there is none like *thee*.

3. O how wise was that holy soul, that said, *My mind is firmly settled, and grounded on Christ*. Vita S. Agath.

If it were so with me, then would
not

not humane fear to easily trouble me, nor the pride of words move me.

Who can foresee all things? who is able to beware before hand of future evils?

If things, even foreseen, do often hurt us; how can things unlooked for choose but wound us grievously?

But why did I not provide better for my self, miserable wretch? why also have I so easily given credit to others?

But alas! we are men, and (God knows) weak and frail men, although by many we are reputed, and called Angels?

To whom shall I give credit, LORD? to whom but *Thee*?

Thou art the *Truth*, that neither deceivest, nor canst be deceived. And on the other side, *every man is a liar* (Psal. III.) weak, unconstant

stant, and subject to fail, especially in words ; and therefore we must not easily give credit even to that which in outward shew seems at first a certain truth.

4. O with how great wisdom hast *thou* warned us to take heed of men? *Mich. 7.*

And, because the enemies of man are his familiar and household acquaintants ; not to trust if one should say, *Behold here, or behold there !* Matt. 24. Mar. 13.

I am taught to my cost ; and I would to God I might thereby increase my wariness, and not my folly.

Be wary (saith one) *be wary* : keep unto thy self what I tell thee : and whilst I hold my *peace*, and think it is secret ; he cannot keep that secret, which he desired should be secret, but presently discloseth me,

me, and himself, and goes his way.

From such tales, and such imprudent people, protect me, O Lord, that I fall not into their hands, nor ever commit such errors.

Give me *grace*, my God, to observe *truth*, and constancy in my words, and remove farr from me a deceitful tongue.

What I am not, willing to suffer, I ought by all means to avoid.

5. O, How good a thing it is to be silent, and not to talk of others, *Prov.* 25. nor to believe all that is said, nor easily to report what we have heard. *Esay.* 24. To lay ones self open to few, Always to seek after *thee* the Beholder of the heart, nor to be carried about with every wind of words; but to desire that all things both within, and without be accomplished.

ed according to *thy* will and pleasure.

How secure it is for the keeping of heavenly *grace* to fly the fight of men, and not to seek those things that seem to cause admiration abroad, but to follow that with all diligence which brings amendment of life, and increase of fervour.

6. To how many hath Virtue known, and over-hastily commended, been hurtful?

How profitable hath *grace* been kept with silence in this mortal life, which is nothing but a perpetual temptation and warefare? *Job* 7.

CHAP. XLVI.

*Of putting our trust in God, when
evil words arise.*

I. SON, Be constant, and put thy
trust in *me*.

For, what are words but words?
they pass through the air, but hurt
not. *Psal. 36.*

If thou be guilty, determine
quickly to amend thy self: if thou
be innocent, resolve to suffer this
willingly for *God*.

It is a small matter to suffer some-
times a few words, if thou hast not
yet the courage to endure stripes.

And why do small matters go to
thine heart, but because thou art
yet carnal, and regardest men more
than thou oughtest.

Because thou art afraid to be de-
spised, therefore thou wilt not be
repre-

reprehended for thy faults, and therefore seekest shadows of excuses.

2. BUT look better into thy self, and thou shalt find that the world yet lives in thee, and a vain desire to please men.

For when thou refusest to be humbled and reprov'd for thy faults, it is surely evident that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the world, nor the world perfectly crucified to thee.

But give diligent ear to *my words*, and thou shalt little respect ten thousand words spoken by men.

Behold, If all should be spoken against thee that could be most maliciously invented, what would it hurt thee, if thou didst permit it to pass, and make no reckoning at all of it? Could all those words pluck as much as one hair from thy head?

3. BUT

3. BUT he that hath not his heart settled *within* him, nor *God* before his eyes, is easily moved with every little dispraise.

When as he that trusts in *me*, and confides not in his own judgment, shall be free from humane fears. *Psal. 7.*

For, *I* am the Judge, and discern-er of all secrets, *I* know how the matter passed; *I* know him that offers the injury, and him that suffers it.

From *me* hath this word proceeded, this hath happened by *my* permission, *that out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed.* *Luk. 2.*

I shall judg the guilty, and the innocent; but, by a secret judgment, I would before hand try them both.

4. THE testimony of men oftentimes

times deceives; *My* judgment is alwayes true, it shall stand and not be overthrown.

It is commonly hidden and secret, and not known in every thing but to few; notwithstanding it never errs, neither can it erre, although to the eyes of the foolish, it seems not right.

Men ought therefore to return to me in every judgment, and not to stand in their own opinions. *Prov.*

12.

For, The just man will not be troubled what ever happens unto him from God: and if any thing be wrongfully brought forth against him, he will not much care, neither will he vainly be glad, if by others he be with reason excused.

For, he considers that I am he that searcheth the hearts and reins, and do judg not according to the outward face, nor humane appearance;

For,

For, that is oftentimes culpable in *my* sight, which in the judgment of men is commendable.

O Lord my God, the just Judge, strong, and patient; Thou knowest the frailty and perversity of man; be thou my strength, and all my truth; for mine own conscience sufficeth me not.

Thou knowest that which I cannot reach unto, and therefore in every reprehension I ought to have borne it patiently and meekly.

Vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I have failed herein; and give me again *grace* of greater sufferance.

For, *thy* bountiful mercy is more available to me for the obtaining of *thy* pardon, than my conceived justice for the defence of my hidden conscience.

Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby justify my

my self (1 Cor. 4.) For, if thy mercy be away, *no man living shall be justified in thy sight.* Psal. 142.

CHAP. XLVII.

That all grievous things are to be endured for Life-everlasting.

I. **S**ON, Let not thy pains dismay thee, which thou hast undertaken for *Me*; neither be thou discomforted, for the tribulations which do befall thee; but let *My* promise strengthen, and comfort thee in all events.

I am able to reward thee, above all measure.

Thou shalt not long toyl here, nor always be oppressed with grief.

Attend awhile, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thy evils.

There

There will come a time, when all labour, and trouble shall cease.

Little, and short, is all that passeth away with Time.

2. Do as thou dost; *Labour faithfully in my Vineyard, I will be thy reward.* Mat. 20.

Write, read, sing, mourn, keep silence, pray, suffer crosses manfully: Life-everlasting is worthy of all these, and greater, combats.

Peace shall come in the day which is known unto our Lord, and it shall not be day nor night (to wit, of this time) but everlasting light, infinite brightness, steadfast peace, and secure rest.

Thou shalt not then say, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death.* Rom. 7. nor cry, *Wo be unto me, for that my dwelling in a strange country is prolonged!* Psal. 119.

Q

For

*For Death shall be thrown down,
and Health shall be without decay;
no Anxiety, but blessed Joy, sweet
and glorious Company.*

3. O, IF thou hadst seen the everlasting crowns of the Saints in heaven, and with how great glory they now rejoyce, who in times past were contemptible to this world, and esteemed unworthy of life it self; truly, thou wouldst presently humble thy self even unto the earth, and wouldst rather seek to be under the feet of all, than to have command so much as over one; neither wouldst thou desire pleasant daies of this time, but rather rejoyce to be afflicted for God; and esteem it thy greatest gain, to be reputed as nothing among men.

4. O! IF thou hadst a feeling of these things, and didst suffer them
to

to enter into the depth of thy heart, how durst thou so much as once to complain?

Are not all painful labours to be endured for everlasting life?

It is no small matter to lose, or to gain the *Kingdom of heaven*.

Lift up thine eyes therefore unto heaven: Behold, I and all my Saints with me, who in this world had great conflicts, do now rejoyce; now are comforted, now are secure, now do rest; and shall remain with me everlastingly, in the Kingdom of *my Father*.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Of the everlasting Day, and shortness of this Life.

I. **O** BLESSED mansion of the heavenly City! O most cleer day of eternity, which night obscures not, *Apoc. 21.* but highest

Q 2

Truth

Truth ever lighteneth !

Day , ever pleasant , always serene , never changing into a contrary state ! O that , that-Day would once appear , and all those temporal things were at an end !

To the Saints , it shines glittering with everlasting brightness ; but , to Pilgrims upon earth it appears only affarr off , and , as it were , *through a glasse*.

2. THE Inhabitants of heaven know how joyful That-day is ; but the banished children of *Eve* , bewail the bitterness , and tediousness of This.

The days of this life are short , and evil , full of sorrow and anguish , where man is defiled with many sins , incumbred with many passions , disquieted with many soars , filled with many cares , distracted with many curiosities , intangled with

Of the Imitation of Christ. 317

with many varieties, incompassed with many errors, tyred with many labours, vexed with many temptations, weakned with delights, tormented with wants.

3. O, WHEN will there be an end of these many labours ! when shall I be delivered from the miserable bondage of sin ! *Rom. 7.* When shall I, O Lord, think of thee alone ? when, shall I perfectly rejoyce in thee ? *Psal. 70.*

When shall I be without all impediment in true liberty ? without all grief of mind, and body ?

When shall I have firm *peace* without trouble ? *peace* secure, *peace* within, *peace* without, *peace* every-way assured.

O good JESU, When shall I stand to behold thee ? when shall I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdom ? When wilt thou be *all in all* to me ?

Q 3

O

O when shall I be with thee in thy Kingdom, which *thou* hast prepared for thy beloved from all eternity!

I am left a poor, and banished man, in an Enemy's country; where there are daily warrs, and very great misfortunes.

4. COMFORT my banishment, assuage my grief; for, my whole desire aspires unto *thee*.

And all whatsoever this world offers to me for comfort, is burden-som to me.

I desire intinely to enjoy *thee*, but cannot attain unto it.

I would gladly fix my heart on heavenly things; but temporal cares, and immortified passions, weigh me down.

In mind I would be above all things; but, I am forced to be subject to the flesh against my will.

Thus,

Thus, unhappy man, I fight with my self, and *am become grievous to my self, whilst my spirit seeks after things above, and my flesh after things below.* Rom. 7. & 8.

5. O, WHAT do I suffer within! whilst in mind I consider heavenly things; and suddenly, in my prayers, a multitude of fleshly fancies present themselves before me.

My God, Be not farr from me; Depart not in thy wrath, from thy servant; Cast forth thy lightning and disperse them; Shoot thy darts, and break all the phansies of the enemy! Psal. 70.

Grant me grace, speedily to cast away and condemn the fancies of vices.

Gather my senses together to thee, make me forget all worldly things.

Succour me, *everlasting Truth*, that no vanity may moove me.

Q 4

Come

Come, *heavenly Sweetness*, and let all impurity fly from *thy* face.

Pardon me also, and mercifully forgive me, as often as I think on any thing else in prayer besides *thee*.

For, I confess truly, that I am wont to be subject to many distractions.

I am not often times there, where I do bodily stand, or sit; but, rather there where my thoughts do carry me.

There I am, where my thought is; and there oftentimes my thought is, where my affection is.

That quickly comes into my mind which is naturally delightfom, or, through custom, pleasing.

6. AND for this reason; *Thou*, who art *truth it self*, hast plainly said, *Where thy treasure is, there also thy heart is*, Matt. 6.

It

If I *love* heaven, I willingly think of heavenly things.

If I love the world, I rejoyce at the felicity of it, and am sorry for the adversity of it.

If I love the flesh, I oftentimes imagine what is pleasing to the flesh.

If I *love* the *spirit*, I delight to think of *spiritual things*.

For, whatsoever things I love, of them I willingly speak and hear, and carry home with me the images of them.

But, Blessed is the man who for thee, O *Lord*, bids farewell to all creatures; who violently resists nature, and through, the fervour of *spirit*, crucifieth the lusts of the flesh; that, with a clear conscience, he may offer pure prayer to *thee*, and be worthy of the company of the Angelical Quires; all earthly things being exteriorly and interiorly shut forth.

CHAP. XLIX.

Of the desire of Eternal life, and how great things are promised to them that fight.

MY son, When thou perceivest a longing to Eternal bliss to be infused into thee from above, and desirest to depart out of the tabernacle of this body, that thou mayst without any shadow of interchange, contemplate *my light*; open thy heart, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole affection.

Give thy greatest thanks to the *heavenly goodness*, who deals with thee so favourably, visits thee mercifully, excites thee ardently, lifteth thee up powerfully, lest, through thy own weight, thou fall down to the vanities of the earth.

Neither

Neither dost thou obtain this by thine own thought and endeavour, but through the onely favour of *heavenly grace*, and divine bounty, that thou mayst profit in virtue, and greater humility; and prepare thy self to future battels, and endeavour to cleave unto *me* with the whole affection of thy heart, and serve *me* with a fervent will.

2. SON, Fire often burns, but flame ascends not without smoke.

In like manner, the desires of some men are earnestly carried to the desire of heavenly things; yet, are they not free from temptation of carnal affection; and therefore, it is not altogether purely for the honour of *God*, which they so earnestly request of *him*.

Such is also thy desire, which with much importunity thou representest unto *me*.

For,

For, that is not *pure* and perfect, which is infected with self-interest.

3. ASK not that which is delightful, and profitable to *thee*, but that which is grateful and honorable unto *me*.

For, if thou judgest rightly, thou oughtst to prefer and follow my appointment, rather than thine own desire, or any thing to be desired.

I know thy desire, and have heard thy frequent groans.

How thou wouldst be in the freedom of the glory of the Sons of *God*.

How the celestial habitation, and the heavenly country full of joy doth delight thee.

But, the hour is not yet come; for, it is yet another time, a time of war, a time of labour, and tryal.

Thou desirest to be satisfied with the chiefest Good, but thou canst not attain unto it, for the present.

I

I am it : Expect me (saith our Lord) till the Kingdom of God come.

4. THOU art yet to be tryed on earth, and to be exercised in many things.

Comfort shall be sometimes given thee, but full-satiety shall not be granted.

Take courage therefore, and be stout; as well in doing, as in suffering things, contrary to thy nature; thou must become a new man, and be changed to another. *Josh. 1.*

Thou must oftentimes do that which thou wouldst not, and leave undone that which thou wouldst. *Eph. 4.*

That which is pleasing to others, shall go well forward; that which thou desirest henceforth, shall not speed.

That which others say, shall be observed; what thou sayst, shall

NOT

not be heeded; others shall ask and receive, thou shalt ask and not have.

5. OTHERS shall be great in the praises of men; but, of thee there shall be no speech.

To others this, or that, shall be committed; but thou shalt be accounted fit for nothing.

And hereat nature will sometimes repine; and it is much, if thou endure it with silence.

In these and such like things, a faithful servant of our Lord is wont to be tryed, how he can deny and overcome himself in all things.

There is scarce any thing wherein thou hast such need to mortifie thy self, as in Seeing, and Suffering what is contrary to thy will; especially when that is commanded, which seems inconvenient to thee, and to little purpose.

And

And being placed under authority, thou dar'st not resist a higher power.

It seems therefore hard to thee to walk at the beck of another, and leave wholly thine own way.

6. BUT consider, Son, that these labours soon end, and have a reward great above measure; and thou wilt receive no grief thereby, but a strong comfort of thy patience.

For, in regard of the little of thy will, which thou now willingly forsak'st, thou shalt for ever have thy will in heaven.

There indeed, thou shalt have all that thou wilt; all that thou canst desire.

There indeed, thou shalt enjoy all good, without fear of losing it.

There, thy will shall be ever one with *me*, it shall desire nothing strange, or peculial.

There,

There, no man shall withstand thee, no man complain of thee; no man hinder thee; nothing come against thee: but all things desirable shall be there together present, and delight thy whole desire, and satiate it to the full.

There, *I* will give thee glory for the reproach which thou suffered'st, a garment of praise for grief, for the lowest place the seat of a Kingdom for ever.

There, the fruit of obedience shall appear, the labour of penance rejoyce, and humble subjection shall be gloriously crowned.

7. Now, therefore, bow thy self humbly under the hands of all, and heed not, Who said, or commanded this.

But of this be very careful, that whether thy Prelate, Equal or Inferiour, require any thing of thee,
or

or do but insinuate; thou take it all for good, and endeavour to perform it with a sincere intention.

Let one seek this, another that; let one glory in this, another in that, and be praised a thousand-thousand-times; yet, do thou rejoyce neither in this, nor that, but in the contempt of thy self, and in *my* good pleasure and sole honour.

This thou art to wish, That in life and in death, God may be always glorified in thee.

C H A P. L.

How a desolate person ought to offer himself into the hands of God.

I. **L**ORD GOD; Holy Father, be thou now, and for ever blessed, for that, as thou wilt, it is done, and what thou dost is good.

Let

Let thy servant rejoyce in *thee*,
not in himself, nor any thing else;
for *thou* alone art true gladness.

Thou art my hope, and my crown;
thou art my joy, and my honour.

O Lord, what hath *thy* servant,
but what he hath of *thee*, even with-
out any desert of his?

All is *thine*, whatsoever *thou* hast
given, and whatever *thou* hast made.

I Cor. 4.

*I am poor, and in labours, from my
youth; and sometimes my soul is hea-
vy, even to tears, Psal. 87. and some-
times is troubled in her self, by rea-
son of passions which rise against
her.*

2. I desire the joy of *peace*; I
crave the *peace* of *thy* children, who
are fed in the light of *thy* com-
fort.

If *thou* give *peace*, if *thou* infuse
holy joy, the soul of *thy* servant
shall

shall be full of sweetness, and devout in *thy* praise.

But, if *thou* withdraw *thy* self, as very often *thou* art wont, *he* will not be able to run the way of *thy* commandments: but rather his knees are bowed to knock his breast; for, it is not with him as it was yesterday, and the day before; when *thy* light shined on his head, and he was protected under the shadow of *thy* wings, from temptations rushing upon him.

3. O righteous *Father*, holy and ever to be praised; the hour is come that thy servant may be proved.

O *Father*, to be beloved; It is fit, that in this hour, thy servant suffer something for *thee*.

O *Father*, to be honoured; The hour is come, which from all eternity *thou* didst foreknow should come, that, for a short time thy servant

vant should be exteriorly oppressed, but interiorly live with *thee*.

He should be a little despised, humbled, and made as an object in the sight of men, and much afflicted with passions, and infirmities; that he may rise again with thee, in the rising of new *light*, and be glorified in heaven.

Thou hast so appointed it, *holy Father*, and wilt have it so; and this is fulfilled, which *thyself* hast commanded.

4. FOR, it is a grace to *thy* friend to suffer, and be afflicted in this world, for thy love; how often soever, and by whomsoever *thou* permittest it to be done.

Without *thy* counsel and providence, and without cause, nothing is done on earth.

It is good for me, O Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn

learn thy justifications, and cast away all haughtiness of heart and presumption. Psal. 118.

It is profitable for me that shame hath covered my face, that I may rather seek to *thee*, than to men for comfort.

I have learned also hereby, to dread thy unsearchable judgments, who afflictest the just with the wicked, but not without equity, and justice.

5. I give *thee* thanks, that *thou* hast not spared my sins, but hast scourged me with stripes of love-inflicting sorrows, and causing distresses both within and without.

There is none under heaven, that can comfort me, but *Thou*, my Lord God, the heavenly Physician of souls: *who woundest, and healest; bringest to hell, and drawest back again.* Tob. 13.

Let

Let thy correction be upon me, and thy rod shall instruct me. Psal. 17.

9. BEHOLD, beloved Father, I am in thy hands; I bow my self under the rod of thy correction; let my neck and shoulders feel thy stripes, that my crookedness may be conformed to *thy* Will.

Make me a pious and humble disciple of *thine*, as *thou* art wont well to do; that I may walk according to thy pleasure.

I commit my self and all my faults to *thee*, to be corrected.

It is better to be rebuked here, than hereafter.

Thou knowest all, and every thing, and there is nothing in the conscience of man hid from *thee*.

Before things are done, *thou* knowest that they will happen, and *thou* hast no need to be taught, or admonished of those things that are
to

to be done upon earth.

Thou knowest what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation conduceth to the purging the rust of sin.

Do with me according to *thy* desired good pleasure, and despise not my sinful life: better, and more clearly known to none than to *Thee* alone.

7. GRANT me, O *Lord*, to know what ought to be known; and to love what ought to be loved, to praise that which is most pleasing to *thee*, to esteem that which appears precious to *thee*, to despise that which is contemptible in *thy* sight.

Suffer me not to judg according to the sight of the exteriour eye, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant men; but, to determin of *spiritual*, and visible things with a true judgment,

ment, and above all things ever to search after the good pleasure of *thy Will*.

8. THE senses of men are often deceived in judging.

The lovers of this world also are deceived, in loving visible things only.

What is man the better therefore, because he is reputed greater by man?

The deceitful deceive the deceitful; the vain deceive the vain; the blind the blind; the weak the weak, whilst he exalts him; and doth truly confound him, whilst he vainly praiseth him.

For, how much every one is in *thy* sight, so much he is, and no more, saith the humble Saint *Francis*.

CHAP. LI.

That we ought to insist in humble works, when we are not able for high things.

I. SON, Thou art not always able to continue in the fervent desire of virtue; nor to persist in the high pitch of *contemplation*: but thou must sometimes, of necessity, by reason of original corruption, descend to inferiour things; and bear the burden of this corruptible life, even against thy will, and with irksomness.

As long as thou carriest this mortal body, thou shalt feel trouble, and heaviness of heart.

Thou oughtst therefore, in flesh, often to bewail the burden of flesh; for that, thou canst not always persevere in *spiritual* exercises, and *divine contemplation*.

R

2. IT

2. IT is then expedient for thee to fly to humble, and exterior works; and to recreate thy self in good actions, to expect with a firm confidence my coming and heavenly visitation, to bear thy banishment patiently, and the dryness of thy mind, till thou be visited again by *me*, and delivered from all anxieties; for, *I* will make thee forget thy pains, and enjoy interior quietness.

I will lay open before thee the pleasant fields of Scripture, *and with a dilated heart thou shalt begin to run the way of my commandments*: Psal. 118. and thou shalt say, *The sufferings of this time are not condigne to the future glory, that shall be revealed in us.* Rom. 8.

CHAP. LII.

*That man must not esteem himself
worthy of comfort, but rather guilty
of stripes.*

I. **I** AM not worthy, Lord, of
thy comfort, or any spiritual
visitation.

And thou dealest therefore justly
with me, when *thou* leavest me poor,
and desolate.

For, if I could shed tears like a
Sea, yet were not I worthy of *thy*
comfort; therefore I am worthy
of nothing but stripes and punish-
ments.

For I have grievously, and of-
ten, offended *thee*, and very much
sinned in many things.

According therefore to *true* rea-
son, I am not worthy of any com-
fort.

R 2

But

But thou art clement, and merciful, who wilt not have thy works to perish, to shew the riches of thy goodness to vessels of mercy, and, even beyond all ones own desert, vouchsafest to comfort thy servant above humane measure.

For thy comforts are not like humane Fables.

2. *WHAT* have I done, *O Lord*, that thou shouldst impart any heavenly comfort unto me?

I do not remember that I have ever done any good; but have always been prone to sin, and slothful to amendment.

It is true, and I cannot deny it; If I should say otherwise, *thou* wouldst stand against me, and there would be none to defend me.

What have I deserved for my sins, but hell, and everlasting fire?

In *truth* I confess my self to be
worthy

worthy of all scorn and contempt; and it is unfit I should dwell among *thy* devout servants. *Job. 9.*

And though I am unwilling to hear this, yet notwithstanding, according to truth, *I will argue my sins against me, that I may better deserve to obtain thy mercy. Psal. 50.*

3. WHAT shall I say being guilty, and worthy of all confusion? I can utter from my mouth no other word but this only, *I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned; have mercy on me, and pardon me.*

Suffer me a little that I may bewail my grief, before I go unto the land of darkness, and be covered with the shadow of death. Job. 10.

What dost thou chiefly require of a guilty miserable sinner, but that he be contrite, and sorrowful, and humble himself for his offences?

Hope of forgiveness is bred in

true contrition, and humbleness of heart.

A troubled conscience is reconciled, grace lost is repaired, man defended from future wrath, and *God* and a penitent soul meet in the holy kiss of *peace*.

Humble contrition for sins is an acceptable sacrifice to thee, O Lord, savouring much more sweet in thy presence than burning frankincense.
Psal. 50.

This is also the grateful oyntment which thou wouldst have to be poured upon *thy* feet. *Luke 7.*

For, thou didst never despise an humble and contrite heart, Psal. 50.

There is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of the enemy.

Whatever uncleanness hath been elsewhere contracted, and whatever is defiled is amended, and washed away, there.

CHAP. LIII.

That the Grace of God is not given to these that savour of earthly things.

I. SON, *My grace is precious, it suffers not it self to be mingled with exterior things, or earthly comforts.*

Thou oughtst therefore to cast away all impediments of grace.

If thou desire to receive the infusion thereof, choose a secret place to thy self; love to dwell alone with thy self; desire the conversation of none; but rather pour out devout prayers unto *God*, that thou mayst keep thine mind compunct, and thy conscience pure.

Esteem the whole world as nothing.

Prefer the attendance on *God*,
R 4 before

before all other employments.

For thou canst not attend unto me, and delight in transitory things.

Thou oughtst to sequester thy self from thy acquaintants and friends, and keep thy mind deprived of all temporal comforts. *Mat.*

19.

So the blessed Apostle Saint Peter beseecheth all faithful friends of CHRIST, *To keep themselves as strangers and pilgrims in this world from carnal desires, which war against the soul, 1 Pet. 2.*

2. O how great confidence shall he have at the hour of death, who is not detain'd in this world by any worldly affection?

But a weak mind is not yet capable of so retired a heart, nor doth a sensual man understand the *liberty* of an *intern* man.

If notwithstanding he will be spiritual;

ritual, he ought as well to renounce that which is far off, as that which is near him, and to beware of no man more than of himself.

If thou perfectly overcome thyself, thou shalt with more ease subdue all things else.

It is a perfect victory, to triumph over our selves.

For he that keeps himself under in such sort, that his sensuality be subject to reason, and reason in all things obedient to *Me*; he is truly a Conqueror of himself, and Lord of the world.

3. IF thou desire to mount unto this height, thou must begin manfully, and set the ax to the root, that thou mayst root out, and destroy thy secret inclination to thyself, and to all private and earthly good.

Upon the inordinate love of a

R 5

mans

mans self, depends almost all whatsoever is to be wholly overcome in us; and that being once overcome, there will presently insue great peace and tranquillity.

But, because few endeavour to die perfectly to themselves, therefore they remain intangled in themselves, and cannot be lifted up in *spirit* above themselves.

But he that desires to walk freely with me, it is necessary to mortifie his inordinate and naughty affections, and adhere to no creature with desire through private love.

CHAP. LIV.

*Of the different motions of Grace,
and Nature.*

I. SON, Observe diligently the motions of Nature and Grace, for they move very contrarily and subtilly,

subtilly; and can hardly be distinguished but by him that is *spiritual*, and *internally* illuminated.

All men indeed desire that which is good, and pretend some good in their words, or deeds; and therefore under pretence of good, many are deceived.

Nature is crafty and seduceth, intangles and deceives many, and alwayes intends her Self for her End.

But, *Grace* walks simply, and avoids all shew of evil, pretends not deceits, and doth all things *purely* for *God*; in Whom she finally rests.

2. NATURE will not willingly die, or be kept in, or overcome, or be subject, or of her own accord be subdued.

But *Grace* labours to mortifie herself, resists sensuality, seeks to be subject, is willing to be overcome,
and

and will not use her own liberty.

She loves to be kept under discipline, and desires not to domineer over any ; but always to live, remain, and be under *God* ; and, for *God*, is ready to bow her self humbly under all men.

Nature strives for her own commodity, and considers what profit she may reap by another.

But, *Grace* considers not what is commodious and profitable to her self, but rather what is profitable to many.

Nature willingly receives honour and reverence : but *Grace* faithfully ascribes all honour and glory to *God*.

3. NATURE fears shame & contempt, but *Grace* rejoyceth to suffer reproach for the name of JESUS.

Nature loves idleness, and bodily rest

rest and ease; but *Grace* cannot be idle, and willingly embraceth labour.

Nature seeks to have those things that are curious, and precious, and flies that which is mean and base.

But, *Grace* delights in simple and humble things, abhorreth not things grievous, nor refuseth to be clad with old cloaths.

Nature respecteth things temporal, rejoyceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for losses, is moved with every little injurious word.

But, *Grace* ascends to that which is everlasting, and cleaves not to that which fades with time; nor is troubled with loss, nor exasperated with injuries; for she hath placed her treasure and joy in heaven, where nothing perisheth.

4. NATURE is covetous, & doth more willingly receive than give; she

she loves proper and private things.

But, *Grace* is pitiful and liberal to all, avoids singularity, is content with little, and judgeth it *more happy to give than to receive*.

Nature inclines to creatures, to her own flesh, to vanity, and to discourses.

But, *Grace* draws to *God*, and to virtue; renounceth creatures, flyeth the world, hates the desires of the flesh, restrains wandring abroad, blusheth to be seen in publick.

Nature is willing to have some exterior comfort wherein she may delight her senses.

But, *Grace* seeks comfort in *God* alone, and delights above all visible things in the chiefest Good.

5. NATURE doth all for her own gain and profit; she can do nothing freely, but hopes to gain either that which is equal, or better;

or

or praise, or favour for her good deeds; and covets to have her gifts and works much esteemed.

But, *Grace* seeks no temporal thing, nor asks any other reward for her deserts than *God* alone, nor desires more of temporal necessities than what may serve her for the obtaining of things *eternal*.

6. NATURE rejoiceth to have many friends and kindred; she glorieth of noble birth and descent; please the powerful, fawns on the rich, applauds such as are like unto her.

But, *Grace* loves her enemies, is not puffed up, with multitude of friends, nor esteems place or birth, unless it be joyned with great virtue; she rather favours the poor than the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent than potent: rejoices much in the simple, and respects

respects not the deceitful; exhorts the good ever to labour for better gifts, and, through vertue, to be like the *Son of God*?

Nature soon complains of want, and trouble; *grace* constantly suffers want.

7. *NATURE* turns all things to her self, and contends only for her self:

But, *Grace* reduceth all to God from whence they originally proceed; she ascribes no good to her self, nor doth she arrogantly presume of her self; she contends not, nor prefers her own opinion before others, but in every sense and understanding submits her self to the eternal wisdom, and to the *divine judgment*.

Nature covets to know secrets, and to hear news, she will appear abroad, and make use of many things.

things by the Senses; she desires to be known, and to do those things for which she may be praised, and admired.

But, *Grace* cares not to hear news, nor to understand curious matters; for, all this springs from the old corruption, seeing nothing is new, and durable upon the earth: she teacheth therefore to restrain the Senses, to avoid vain pleasing, and ostentation; humbly to hide those things which are worthy of praise, and admiration; and from every thing, and every knowledge draweth profitable fruit, and the praises, and honour of *God*; she will not have her self, or hers, publickly praised; but desires that *God* may be blessed in *his* gifts, *Who* of meer charity bestows all things.

8. *THIS Grace* is a supernatural light,

light, and a certain special gift of God, and the proper mark of the Elect, and pledg of everlasting salvation, which lifts up a man from earthly baseness, to love heavenly things; and, of a carnal man, makes a spiritual person.

By so much the more, therefore, *nature* is suppressed and subdued, so much the greater *grace* is infused, and the *intern* man daily by new visitations more perfected according to the Image of God.

CHAP. LV.

Of the corruption of Nature, and efficacy of divine Grace.

I. **M**Y Lord God, who hast created me to thine Image, and likeness; (*Gen. I.*) grant me this *grace* which thou hast shewed to be so great, and so necessary to salvation,

on, That I may overcome my most wicked nature, which draws to sin, and perdition.

For, I feel in my flesh the law of sin, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive (Rom. 7.) to obey sensuality in many things.

Neither can I resist the passions thereof, unless thy holy grace, fervently infused into my heart, assists me.

2. *THY grace, and great grace,* is necessary that nature may be overcome, which is always prone to evil from her youth.

For, it falling through *Adam* the first man, and being corrupted by sin, the penalty of this stain hath descended upon all mankind. *Gen. 8.*

Nature-it-self, which by *Thee* was created good, and without defect, is now accounted for Vice, and Infirmary of corrupt nature; since
the

the motion thereof, left to it self, draws to evil and abject things :

For the little strength, which remains, is like a certain spark hidden in ashes.

Then is natural Reason it self compassed about with darkness, retaining yet the power to discern betwixt good, and evil; and the difference betwixt true, and false; though it be unable to fulfil all it approves, and enjoys not now the full light of *truth*, nor the former integrity of her affections.

3. HENCE it is, my *God*, that, according to my *interiour man*, I *delight in thy law*, (Rom. 7.) knowing *thy* command to be good, and just, and holy, reprooving also all evil, and shewing that sin is to be shunned.

But in flesh I serve the law of sin, whilst I rather obey the law of sensuality than reason. Hence

Hence it is, that I have a will to good, but cannot tell how to do it.

For this reason, I pass many good things; but, because I want grace to help mine infirmity, through a leight resistance I go back, and faint.

Hence it happens, that I know the way of perfection, and see cleerly enough what I ought to do; but, pressed down with the weight of my own corruption, I rise not unto perfection.

4. O, How very needful, O Lord, is *thy* grace to me, to begin any good work, to go forward, and to accomplish it!

For, without *thy* grace, I can do nothing. *Joh. 15.*

But in *thee* I can do all things, when *thy* grace doth strengthen me.

O heavenly grace, without which
our

our merits are nothing, or any gifts of nature to be esteemed!

Without *thy grace*, O Lord, arts are nothing worth, beauty nothing, riches nothing, strength nothing, wit nothing, eloquence nothing; for gifts of nature are common to good and evil men.

But, *Grace*, or *divine Love*, is the peculiar gift of the Elect, where-with being marked, they are esteemed worthy of life everlasting.

This *grace* so much excels, that neither prophecy, nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation how high soever, is any-wise without it to be esteemed : yea, neither faith, nor hope, or other virtues are acceptable to *thee* without *charity* and *grace*. 1 Cor. 13.

5. O most blessed *grace*, which makes the poor in spirit rich in virtues, and renders the rich in virtues humble

humble of heart; come descend unto me, replenish me in the morning with thy comfort, lest my soul should faint with weariness, and dryness of mind.

I beseech *thee*, O Lord, that I may find *grace* in *thy* sight.

For, *thy grace* is sufficient for me, though other things be wanting which nature desires.

If I am tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I will not fear evils, while *thy grace* is with me; she is my strength, she gives advice, and help; she is stronger than all enemies, and wiser than all the wise.

She is Mistress of *Truth*, Teacher of discipline, light of the heart, solace in affliction, banisher of sorrow, expeller of fear, nurse of devotion, and fountain of tears.

What am I without it, but a piece of dry wood, and an unprofitable block to be cast away?

Let

Let *thy* grace therefore, O Lord, alwayes prevent and follow me, and make me ever diligent in good works.

CHAP. LVI.

That we ought to deny our Selves, and imitate Christ by the Cross.

1. SON, As much as thou canst go out of thy self; so much mayst thou enter into *Me*.

As the being void of all desire of external things, makes *internal peace*; so, interiourly forsaking our selves, conjoyns us to *God*.

I will have thee learn the perfect leaving of thy self unto *my* will, without contradiction, or complaint.

Follow me : I am the way, the truth, and the life. John. 14.

With-

Without the *Way* there is no *Go-*
ing; without *Truth*, there is no
Knowledg; without *Life*, there is
no *Living*.

I am the *Way*, which thou must
follow; the *Truth*, which thou
must believe; the *Life*, which thou
must hope for.

I am the *Way*, which cannot mis-
lead thee; the *Truth*, which cannot
err; the *Life*, which hath no end.

I am a most streight *Way*, a most
supream *Truth*; a true *Life*, a blessed
life, an increated *Life*.

If thou remain in my *way* thou
shalt know my *Truth*; and *truth*
shall deliver thee; and thou shalt
attain to *Life* everlasting.

2. IF thou wilt enter into life,
keep my commandments (Luke 9.);
if thou wilt know the truth, believe
me; if thou wilt be perfect, sell all:
If thou wilt be my disciple, deny thy
S self;

self; if thou wilt possess a blessed life, despise this present life, John. 12. Luke 14.

If thou wilt be exalted in heaven, humble thy self in this world.

If thou wilt reign with *me*, bear the Cross with *me*.

For, The servants of the Cross only, find the way of *true* blis, and *true* light.

3. O LORD JESUS CHRIST, for-as-much as thy life is strict, and contemptible to the world, grant me to imitate the contempt of the world with *thee* : For, the servant is not greater than his Lord, nor the Disciple than his Master, Matt. 6.

Let thy Servant be exercised in thy holy life, since there is my health, and *true* sanctity : whatever I hear, or read besides, doth not fully recreate or delight me.

4. SON,

4. SON, Now thou knowst, and hast readd all these things, happy shalt thou be if thou fulfill them.

He that hath my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him, and will make him sit with me in the Kingdom of my Father, John 24.

Lord, as thou hast said therefore, and promised; so verily let it happen, that I may deserve it.

I have received a Cross from *thy* hand; I will bear it till death, as thou hast laid it upon me.

Truly, The life of a good Monk is a Cross, but [withal it is a] guide to Paradise: it is now begun, it is not lawful to go back, or leave it off.

5. LET us take courage, my brethren, and go forward together; JESUS will be with us.

For the sake of JESUS, we have taken this Cross upon us; for JESUSsake, let us persevere in it.

He will be our helper, who is our Guide and Fore-runner.

Behold, Our King, who will fight for us, walks before us.

Let us follow him courageously; let us not be dismayed; but be ready to die with courage in the bat-tel; let us not blemish our glory, by flying from the Cross.

CHAP. LVII.

*That man be not too much dejected
when he falleth into defects.*

I. SON, Patience and Humility in adversity, are more pleasing to me, than comfort and devotion in prosperity.

What? Art thou grieved for every little

little trifle done, or spoke against thee? Though it had been much more, thou oughtst not to have been moved.

But now let it pass: It is not the first, or any new thing; nor will it be the last, if thou live long.

Thou art manful enough as long as no evil, or adverse thing happens; thou canst give good counsel also, and canst strengthen others with thy words.

But, when any tribulation suddenly knocks at thy door, thou art void of counsel and strength.

Behold thy great frailty, which thou hast often experienced even on small occasions.

Yet they are done notwithstanding for thy good, when these, or the like things, befall thee.

2. PUT it out of thy heart, the best thou canst; and, if it touch

S 3

thee,

thee, let it not deject thee, or trouble thee; bear it at least patiently, if thou canst not joyfully.

Though thou art unwilling to hear it, and feel'st disdain; yet repress thy self, and suffer no inordinate word to pass out of thy mouth, which may be a scandal to the weak.

The storm now raised will be quickly allayed; and the interiour grief appeased, through the return of *grace*.

I do yet live (saith our Lord) ready to help thee, and comfort thee more than before; if thou put thy trust in *me*, and devoutly call upon *me*.

3. BE more indifferent and quiet in mind, and prepare thy self for greater suffering.

All is not lost, if thou feel thy self often afflicted, or grievously tempted;

tempted: thou art a man, not God; thou art flesh, not an Angel.

How canst thou look to continue ever in the same state of virtue, when an Angel in heaven fell, and the first man in Paradise; both which stood not long? *Gen. 3.*

I am He who gives healthful comfort to them that mourn, and do raise up to *my divinity* such as know their own frailty.

4. BLESSED be thy word, O Lord, more sweet to my mouth than hony and the hony-comb, *Psal. 118.*

What should I do in my so great tribulations, and anguishes; unless thou didst comfort me with thy holy speeches?

What matter is it, how much, and what, I suffer; so I may at length attain unto the Haven of salvation?

Grant me a good end; grant me a happy passage out of this world; Be

*mindful of me, my God, and direct
me the streight way to thy Kingdom.
Amen.*

CHAP. LVIII.

*Of not searching into high matters;
and the secret Judgments of God.*

1. **S**ON, Beware thou dispute not
of high matters, nor of the
secret judgments of God; why this
man is forsaken, and that man assured
to so great grace: why this
man also is so much afflicted, and
that man so highly advanced.

These things exceed all humane
power, neither can any reason or
discourse search out the judgment
of God.

When therefore the enemy suggests
these things to thee, or some
curious people inquire of them, answer

swer that of the Prophet :

Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgments are right, and that the judgments of the Lord are true, and justified in themselves. Psal. 118. Psal. 118.

My judgments are to be feared, not discussed ; for they are incomprehensible to humane understanding.

2. IN like manner do not inquire, or dispute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holier than the other, or which is greater in the Kingdom of heaven.

These things oftentimes breed strife, and unprofitable contentions ; they nourish also pride, and vainglory ; whence arise envy and dissensions, whilst one will proudly prefer this Saint, another that.

To desire to know, and search out such things, is to no purpose ;

but rather displeaseth the Saints.

For I am not the God of dissention, but of peace, 1. Cor. 14. which peace consists rather in true humility, than in exalting of our selves.

3. SOME are carried with zeal of affection to love those, or those most; but this is rather humane than divine.

I am He who made all the Saints, I have given them grace, I have made them partakers of my glory.

I know the merits of every one, I have prevented them in the benedictions of my sweetness.

I foreknew my beloved, before the beginning of the world; I chose them out of the world, they chose not me first, Joh. 15.

I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I led them through sundry temptations: I have infused into them great comforts, I have given

given them perseverance, I have crowned their patience.

4. I know the first and the last;
I embrace all with inestimable love;
I am to be praised in all *my* Saints,
I am to be blessed above all things.

I am to be honoured in every one
whom I have thus gloriously exalted,
and predestinated, without any
of their own precedent merits.

He therefore that contemns one
of the least Saints, honours not the
greatest; since I have made both
the less, and the greater. *James 2.*
Sap. 5.

And he that derogates from any
of the Saints, derogates from *me*,
and from all the rest of them in the
Kingdom of heaven.

All are One through the band of
charity; they think the same, they
will the same; and all love one another
in One.

5. BUT

5. BUT yet (which is much more high) they all *love me*, more than themselves, and their own merits.

For being elevated above themselves, and drawn out of self-love, they tend wholly to the *love of me*, in which they rest injoyingly.

There is nothing can put them back, nothing press them down, from being full of everlasting *Truth*.

They burn with the unquenchable fire of *charity*.

Let therefore carnal and sensual men (who know not how to affect any thing but private joys) forbear to dispute of the state of the Saints.

They add, and take away, according to their own inclination, not according to the pleasure of eternal *Truth*.

6. THERE is ignorance in many,
espe-

especially in those who are but little enlightned; they seldom *love* any with perfect *spiritual love*; they are yet much drawn with a natural affection, and humane friendship to these, or those; and, as they experience themselves in earthly things, so they imagin of heavenly.

But, there is an incomparable difference, which the imperfect know not, and the illuminated persons discern by revelation from above.

7. BEWARE therefore, my Son, that thou treat not curiously of these things which exceed thy knowledg; but labour for this, that thou mayst at least have the meanest place in the Kingdom of God. *Eccl. 7.*

And if any did know who were holier than another, or accounted greater in the Kingdom of heaven; What would this knowledg profit him, unless he would thereby humble.

ble himself more in *my* sight, and stir up his mind to praise *my* name with greater fervour?

He who considers the greatness of his sins, and the littleness of his virtues, and how far he is from the perfection of the Saints, doth that which is more acceptable to *God*, than he that disputes of their greatness or littleness.

It is better to pray to the Saints with devotion and tears, and crave their glorious suffrages with an humble mind, than to search into their secrets with vain inquiry.

8. THEY are well, and right well, contented; if men would content themselves, and refrain from their vain discourses.

They glory not of their own merits; for they ascribe no good unto themselves, but attribute all unto *me*, who of *my* infinite chari-

ty

ly bestowed all upon them.

They are replenished with so great love of *my Godhead*, and such superabundant joy, that there is no glory wanting unto them, nor can our happiness be lacking unto them.

All the Saints how much higher they be in glory, so much the more humble they are in themselves, and nearer, and more beloved by *me*.

And therefore thou hast it written, that *They did cast their crowns before God, and fell down upon their faces before the Lamb, and adored him that lives for ever and ever, Amen. Apoc. 4.*

9. MANY inquire; Who is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven, or God; who know not, whether they shall be numbred among the least.

It is a great matter to be even the least in heaven where all are great.

*Eor, All shall be called, and be the
Sons*

Sons of God; the least shall be as a thousand; and a sinner of an hundred years; shall dy. Esa. 65.

For, when the disciples asked, Who was the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven, they received this answer:

Unless ye be converted, and become as children; you shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Matt. 18.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of heaven. ibid.

10. Woe be to them that disdain to humble themselves willingly with little children; for, the low gate of the Kingdom of heaven will not admit them to enter.

Woe also to rich men, who have their comforts; for, whilst the poor enter into the Kingdom of heaven, they shall stand waiting without. Luk. 6.

Rejoyce.

Rejoyce ye that are humble, and
exsult ye that are poor; for that
Yours is the Kingdom of God; Mat. 5.
yet so; as ye walk in truth.

CHAP. LIX.

*That all hope and trust is to be fixed
on God alone.*

I. **L**ORD, what is my trust which
I have in this life? or what
is the greatest comfort of all things
appearing under heaven? Is it not
thou my Lord God, whose mercies
are without number?

Where hath it been well with me
without *thee*? or, When could it be
ill with me, when *thou* wert pre-
sent?

I had rather be poor for *thee*,
than rich without *thee*.

I rather choose to be a pilgrim on
earth.

earth with *thee*, than to possess heaven without *thee*.

Where *thou* art, there is heaven; and there death, and hell, where *thou* art not.

Thou art my desire, and therefore I must needs sigh after thee, and cry and pray.

Finally, in none can I trust, who in time of necessity may more seasonably help me than *thee* only, *my God*.

Thou art my hope and trust, thou art my Comforter, and most faithful to me in all things. *Psal. 9. Psal. 141.*

2. ALL men seek their own gain, *thou* only seekst my salvation and profit; and turnest all things to my good. *Philip. 2.*

And though *thou* expose me to many temptations and adversities, yet *thou* ordainest all this for my profit,

profit, who art wont to prove *thy* beloved servants a thousand ways; in which proof *thou* oughtest no less to be beloved, and praised, than if *thou* didst replenish me with heavenly consolations.

3. IN *thee* therefore, my Lord God, I put all my hope, and refuge; and place all my tribulation and anguish.

For, I find all to be infirm and instable, whatever I behold out of *thee*.

For, many friends shall not avail me, nor strong helpers aid me, nor prudent counsellors give a profitable answer, nor the books of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliver, nor any secret place defend, if thou thy self do not assist, help, strengthen, comfort, instruct, and keep us.

4. For,

4. FOR, all things which seem to be ordained for the Rest and felicity of man, when *thou* art absent, are nothing, and conferr no felicity at all.

Thou therefore art the end of all that is good, and the height of life, and the depth of wisdom; and, the strongest comfort of thy servants, is to trust in *thee* above all things.

To *thee*, I lift up mine eyes; in *thee* I confide, my God, Father of mercy.

Bless and sanctifie my soul with heavenly blessing, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the seat of thy eternal glory; and that nothing may be found in the temple of thy greatness, that may offend the eyes of thy Majesty.

According to the greatness of thy goodness, and the multitude of thy
mercies

mercies, take pity on me, and that the prayer of thy poor servant, who is far exiled from thee in the region of the shadow of death. Psal. 50.

Protect and keep the soul of thy little servant amidst so many dangers of this corruptible life, and through the assistance of thy grace, direct him in the way of peace, to the country of everlasting light. Amen.

The End of the Third Book.

THE



THE
FOURTH BOOK
OF THE
IMITATION
OF
CHRIST.

Of the Sacrament of the Body
of Christ.

*An Exhortation to the Holy Com-
munion.*

The Voice of Christ.

COME unto me all yee that la-
bour, and are burthend, and
I will refresh you, saith our Lord.
Mat. 11.

The

The Bread which I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world. Joh. 6.

Take ye, and eat; This is my Body, that shall be delivered for you. Mat. 26.

This do, in remembrance of me, I Cor. 11.

He that eateth my flesh, & drinketh my blood, remains in me, and I in him. John. 6.

The words that I have spoken to you, are spirit, and life. John. 6.

CHAP. I.

With how great Reverence Christ is to be received

The Voyce of the Disciple.

I. **T**HESE, are thy words, *ô Christ*, everlasting Truth, though not spoken at one time, nor written in one place.

Since therefore they are thy words,

words, they are all to be received by me thankfully, and faithfully.

They are *thine*, and *thou* hast spoken them, for my Salvation.

I willingly receive them from *thy* mouth, that they may be the more closely imprinted in my heart.

These devout words full of sweetness, and *love*, do stir me up: but, mine own offences, terrify me; and my impure conscience keeps me back from receiving so great Mysteries.

The sweetness of *thy* words do encourage me, but the multitude of my sins do oppress me.

2. THOU commandst me to come confidently unto *thee*, if I will have part with *thee*; and to receive the food of immortality, if I desire to obtain everlasting life, and glory.

Come (sayst *thou* unto me) *all ye that labour, and are burthened, and I will refresh you*, Mat. 11.

O

O Sweet, and lovely Word in the ear of a sinner, that *thou* my Lord God shouldst invite the poor, and needy, to the communion of *thy most blessed Body*?

But who am I, Lord, that may presume to approach unto thee?

Behold, the heavens cannot contain *thee*, and *thou* say'st, *Come ye all unto me.*

3. WHAT means this most pious vouchsafing, and so loving an invitation?

How shall I dare to come, who am conscious of no good thing, whereon I may presume?

How shall I bring *thee* into my house, who have often offended *thy* most gracious countenance?

The Angels and Archangels reverence *Thee*, the Saints and Just men fear *thee*, and thou say'st, *Come ye all unto me.*

T

Unless

Unless *thou*, ô *Lord*, didst say it,
 Who would believe it to be true?
 and, unless thou didst command it,
 Who would dare to approach?

4. So *Noah* a just man laboured
 an hundred and more years in build-
 ing of the Ark, that he with a few
 might be saved (*Gen. 6.*) And how
 can I in one hour's space prepare
 my self with reverence to receive
 the Maker of the world?

*Moses thy servant, thy great and
 special friend*, made an Ark of in-
 corruptible wood; which he also
 covered with most pure Gold, to
 place therein the Tables of the Law.
Exod. 25: & 26.

And shall I, rotten creature, so
 lightly dare to receive the Law-
 maker, and Giver of life?

Solomon the wisest of the Kings of
 Israel, bestowed seven years in
 building a magnificent Temple in
 praise

praise of *thy* name, 3 *Kings*.6. And celebrated the feast of the Dedication thereof eight days together, 3 *Kings*.8.

He offered a thousand peaceable sacrifices, and solemnly set the Ark of the Covenant in the place, prepared for it, with sound of Trumpet, and Jubile.

And I, the most unhappy, and poorest of men, how shall I bring *thee* into my house, who can hardly spend one half hour devoutly; and I would to *God*, it were once almost half an hour, worthily.

5. O MY GOD, How much did they endeavour to do, to please thee!

Alas! How little it is that I do! How short a time do I spend when I prepare my self to receive?

I am seldome wholly recollected, very seldome altogether free from distraction.

T 2

And

And yet surely, no indecent thought should appear in the wholesome presence of *thy Deity*, nor any creature busy me; for, I am not to receive an Angel, but the Lord of Angels for my Guest.

6. AND yet there is great difference between the Ark of the Covenant and the Reliques thereof, and *thy most pure Body* with the unspeakable virtues thereof: between those legal sacrifices, figures of future things; and the true sacrifice of *thy Body*, the compleating of all ancient Sacrifices.

Why do I not therefore become more fervent to enjoy thy venerable presence?

Why do I not prepare my self with greater care to receive thy sacred gifts; sith those holy ancient Patriarchs, and Prophets, yea Kings also, and Princes, with the whole people

people have shewed so great zeal of devotion to thy divine service ?

8. THE most devout King *David* danced before the Ark of God with all his force, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in times past on the Fathers. 2 *King*. 6.

He made Organs of sundry kinds; he published Psalms, and appointed them to be sung with joy; he himself also, plaid upon the Harp.

Being inspired with the grace of the Holy-Ghost, he taught the people of Israel to praise *God* with their whole heart, and with delightful voice every day to bless, and praise *him*.

If so great devotion was then used, and such memory of divine praise before the Ark of the Testament; what reverence and devotion, is now to be performed by me and all Christian people, in the pre-

T 3 fence

sence of this Sacrament, in receiving the most excellent *Body of Christ*?

9. MANY run to sundry places to visit the Reliques of the Saints, and are astonished when they hear of their miraculous works.

They behold the high buildings of Churches, and kiss their sacred bones, wrapped in silk and gold.

And behold, *Thou* art here present with me on the Altar, my *God*, the *Holy of Holies*; *Creator* of all things, and *Lord* of Angels.

Curiosity, and novelty of things, not seen before, do oftentimes draw men to behold such sights; and little fruit of amendment is reaped thereby, especially, where there is such inconstant wandering without true contrition.

But here, in the Sacrament of the *Altar*, *Thou art wholly present my God*, and *Man* CHRIST JESUS;

SUS; where plentiful fruit of eternal salvation, is also reaped; as often as *thou* art worthily, and devoutly received.

And to this not any levity, curiosity, or sensuality invites; but, firm *faith*, devout *hope*, and sincere *charity*.

10. O God, the invisible Creator of the world, how wonderfully dost thou deal with us? how sweetly and graciously dost thou dispose of thine elect, to whom thou offerest thy self to be received in the sacrament! for this exceeds all understanding of man.

This chiefly moves the heart of the devout, and inflames their desire; since *thy true* faithful servants, who dispose their whole life to amendment by this most worthy Sacrament, oftentimes receive great grace of devotion, and love of virtue.

11. O *admirable and hidden grace of this Sacrament, which the faithful of Christ do only know; but the unfaithful, and such as are slaves to sin, cannot experience.*

In this Sacrament, *spiritual grace* is given, and *lost virtue* restored to the soul; and *beauty, disfigured by sin, returns again.*

This grace is so great sometimes, that, with the fulness of infused devotion, not only the mind, but the weak body also feels great increase of strength.

12. OUR coldness therefore and negligence, is much to be bewailed and pittied; that we are not drawn to receive Christ with greater affection, in whom consisteth all the merit, and hope of those that are to be saved.

For, He is our sanctification and
Redem-

Redemption : He is the comfort of passengers , and everlasting enjoyment of the Saints.

It is much therefore to be lamented, that many do so little consider this saving Myſtery, which rejoyleth heaven, and conſerves the whole world.

O blindness and hardneſs of mans heart, that doth not more deeply weigh ſo unſpeakable a gift ; but rather, through daily uſe thereof, comes not to regard it.

13. FOR, if this moſt holy Sacrament were celebrated in one only place, and conſecrated by one only Priest in the world ; with how great deſire, doſt thou think, would men be affected to that place, and to ſuch a Priest of God, that they might hear the divine myſteries celebrated?

But now there are many Priests
T 5 made,

made, and *Christ* is offered up in many places, that so the *grace* and *love* of *God* to man, may appear so much the greater, how much the more this sacred Communion is common throughout the world.

Thanks be to thee, good JESU, eternal Pastor, who hast vouchsafed to refresh us, poor and banished men, with thy most precious Body and Blood: and to invite us to the receiving of these mysteries with the words of thine own mouth, saying;
“Come unto me all ye that labour,
“and are burthened, and I will re-
“fresh you, Matt. 11.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

*That the great goodness and charity
of God is bestowed on man, in this
Sacrament.*

The Voice of the Disciple.

I. **P**RESUMING on thy great
goodness and mercy, O Lord;
I being sick, approach unto my Savi-
our; hungry and thirsty, to the foun-
tain of life; needy, to the King of
heaven; a Servant, to his Lord; a
Creature, to his Creator; desolate, to
my pious comforter.

*But, Whence is this to me, that
thou comest unto me? What am I,
that thou shouldest bestow on me Thy
self? How dare a sinner appear before
thee? and, How dost thou vouchsafe
to come unto a sinner?*

*Thou knowst thy Servant, and
seest*

feest he hath no good in him; why dost thou this for him?

I confess therefore my unworthiness, and acknowledg *thy goodness*.

I praise *thy mercy*. and give *thee* thanks for *thy excessive charity*.

Thou dost this truly for *thine* own sake, not my merits; to the end *thy goodness* may be better known unto me, *thy charity* more abundantly shewed, and *thy* humility more highly commended.

Since therefore it is *thy* pleasure, and *thou* hast commanded that it should be so, this *thy* vouchsafing is pleasing also to me, and I do wish that my offences may be no hindrance.

2. O most sweet and benign JESU,
How great reverence and thanks,
with perpetual praise, is due unto
thee for the receiving of thy sacred
Body; whose dignity no man is
found

found able to express?

But what shall I think of, in this Communion, in the access to my *Lord*; whom I cannot duly reverence, and yet desire to receive *him* devoutly?

What can I think of better, and more profitable, than to humble myself intirely before *thee*, and to exalt *thy* goodness above me?

I praise *thee*, my *God*, and exalt thee for ever.

I despise my self, and subject myself unto *thee*, even unto the depth of my unworthiness.

3. BEHOLD, *Thou art the Holy of Holies!* and I the scum of sinners!

Behold, *Thou* bowest *thy* self down unto me, who am not worthy to look up unto *thee*.

Behold, thou com'st to me; it is *thy* will, to be with me; *Thou* invitest me to thy banquet; *thou* wilt give
me

me *thy* heavenly food, and bread of Angels to eat (*Psal.* 77.) no other truly than *thy* self, the living bread, that descended from heaven, and giveth life to the world, *Joh.* 6.

4. BEHOLD, whence *love* proceeds, what a bounty shines forth, how great thanks and praises are due to *thee* for these things?

O, how wholesome and profitable was *thy* counsel, when *thou* ordainedst it! how sweet and pleasant *thy* banquet, when *thou* gavest *thy* self to be our food!

How wonderful *thy* work, O Lord; how powerful *thy* virtue; how ineffable *thy* Truth!

For, *Thou* didst speak the word, and all things were made, and that was done which *thou* hast commanded. *Gen.* 2. *Psal.* 148.

5. IT is a thing wonderful, and worthy.

worthy of faith, surpassing humane understanding, that *thou, O my Lord God, true God, and true Man*, art wholly contained under a small form of Bread and Wine; and, without being consumed, art eaten by the receiver.

Thou (O Lord of all things) who hast need of none, wouldst dwell in us by the Sacrament.

Preserve my heart and body unspotted, that, with a chearful and pure conscience I may be often able to celebrate *thy* mysteries : That I may receive them to my everlasting salvation, which thou didst chiefly ordain, and institute for thine honour, and perpetual memory.

6. REJOYCE, my soul; and give thanks unto *God* for so noble a gift, and singular comfort, left unto thee in this valley of tears.

For, as often as thou callest to
mind

mind this mystery, and receivest the *Body of Christ*; so often thou dost the work of thy redemption, and art made partaker of all the merits of *Christ*.

For, the *charity* of *Christ* is never diminished, and the greatness of his propitiation is never exhausted.

Thou oughtst therefore alwayes to dispose thy self hereunto, by a fresh renewing of mind, and to weigh with attentive consideration this great mystery of thy salvation.

So great now and joyful it ought to seem unto thee, when thou sayest or hearest *Mass*, as if the same day *Christ*, first descending into the womb of the *Blessed Virgin*, were made *Man*; or, hanging on the *Cross*, did suffer, and die for the salvation of mankind.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to Communicate often.

The Voice of the Disciple.

I. **B**EHOLD, I come unto thee, O Lord, that it may be well with me through *thy* gift, and that I may be delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O Lord, hast prepared in thy sweetness for the poor. Psal. 67.

Behold, in thee is whatsoever I can, or ought to desire.

Thou art my salvation and redemption, my hope and my strength, my honour and my glory.

Make therefore the soul of thy servant joyful this day, because, O Lord JESUS, I have listed my soul unto thee, Psal. 85.

I

I desire now, to receive *thee* devoutly and reverently.

I do long to bring *thee* into my house, that, with *Zacheus*, I may deserve to be blessed by *thee*, and numbred among the children of *Abraham*. Luk. 19.

2. My soul thirsts to receive *thy* Body, my heart aspires to be united with *thee*.

Give thy self to me, and it sufficeth; for, besides *Thee*, no comfort is available.

I cannot be without *thee*, nor live without *thy* visitation.

And therefore I must come often unto *thee*, and receive *thee*, as the only remedy of my health, lest perhaps I faint in the way, if I be deprived of heavenly food.

For, so *thou* didst say (most merciful JESUS) preaching once to the people, and curing sundry diseases,

I

I will not send them home fasting, lest they faint in the way, Matt. 15.

Deal now in like manner with me, who hast left *thy self* in the Sacrament, for the comfort of *thy faithful*.

For, *Thou* art the most sweet refection of the soul; and he who shall eat *thee* worthily, shall be heir and partaker of everlasting glory.

It is necessary truly for me, who oftentimes fall, and sin so quickly, grow dull, and faint; that, by frequent prayers and confessions, and the holy receiving of *thy Body*, I renew, inflame, and cleanse my self; lest perhaps, by longer abstaining, I fall from my holy purposes.

3. FOR, *the senses of man are prone to evil from his youth* (Gen. 8.) and unless thy *divine Medicine* help him, he quickly slides to worse.

This holy Communion therefore
draws

draws back from evil, and strengtheneth in good.

For, if I be now so often negligent and tepid when I Communicate and say *Mafs*; What should I be, if I did not take this remedy, and should not seek so great an help?

And, though every day I am not fit, or well disposed to say *Mafs*; yet I will endeavour, at convenient times, to receive the divine mysteries, and make my self partaker of so great a grace.

For, This is the only principal comfort of a faithful soul, whilst she is a pilgrim from *thee* in this mortal body; that, being often mindful of her *God*, she may receive her *Beloved* with a devout mind.

4. O wonderful benignity of thy piety towards us, that thou, O Lord, Creator, and giver of life to all spirits, dost vouchsafe to come unto a
poor

poor soul, and with thy whole Godhead and Humanity to replenish her hunger.

O happy mind, and blessed soul, that deserves to receive *thee*, her *Lord God* devoutly; and, in receiving *thee*, to be filled with *spiritual joy*!

O how great a *Lord* doth she entertain! how beloved a Guest doth she harbour! how pleasant a Companion doth she receive! how faithful a Friend doth she accept! how bountiful and noble a Spouse doth she embrace! who is to be *beloved* alone above all that is to be *beloved*, and all that may be desired.

Let heaven and earth, and all their beauty, be silent in *thy* presence, my most sweet Beloved; for, whatever beauty, or praise they have, proceeds from *thee*, from thy bounteous liberality, and shall not equal the beauty of *thy* Name, of
whose

whose wisdom there is no end. Psal.
149.

CHAP. IV.

*That many benefits are bestowed on
them who Communicate devoutly.*

The Voice of the Disciple.

I. **O** MY LORD GOD; prevent
thy servant in the blessings
of thy sweetness, that I may deserve
to approach worthily and devoutly
to thy magnificent Sacrament.

Stir up my heart to Thee, and de-
liver it from grievous heaviness.

*Visit me with thy comfort, that I
may taste in spirit thy sweetness, Psal.*
20. which plentifully lieth hid in
this Sacrament, as in the fountain.

Give *light* also to mine eyes, to
behold so great a mystery; and
strengthen

Strengthen me to believe it with undoubted *faith*.

For, it is *thy* work, not mans power; *thy* sacred institution, not mans invention.

For, man of himself is not found able to comprehend and understand these things, which surpass even the subtilty of Angels.

What shall I therefore, unworthy sinner, earth and ashes, be able to search, and comprehend of so high and sacred a mystery?

2. O Lord, In simplicity of heart, with a good and firm *faith*, and at *thy* commandment, I come unto thee with hope, and reverence; and I do verily believe, that *thou* art here present in the Sacrament, *God*, and *Man*.

Thy pleasure is therefore, that I receive *thee*, and through love unite my self unto *thee*.

Wherefore

Wherefore I run unto *thy* mercy, and beg thee to give me special *grace*, that I may *wholy melt in thee*, and abound with *love*, and never hereafter admit any other comfort.

For this most high and worthy Sacrament, is the health of the soul and body; the remedy of all *spiritual* sickness; by it, my vices are cured, passions bridled, temptations overcome, or lessened; greater *grace* infused; virtue begun, and increased; *faith* confirmed, *hope* strengthened, *charity* inflamed, and enlarged.

3. FOR, *Thou* hast bestowed, and still oftentimes dost bestow, many benefits in this Sacrament, on *thy Beloved*, who receive it devoutly; my *God*, Receiver of my soul, Repairer of humane infirmity, and Giver of all inward comfort.

For, *thou* impartest unto them
much

much comfort against sundry tribulations, and liftest them up from the depth of their own dejection, to the hope of *thy* protection; and dost *interiourly* recreate, and illustrate them with a certain new *grace*, in such sort, that they who, before Communion, felt themselves heavy and indisposed, being fed afterwards with this *heavenly Meat & Drink*, do find themselves changed to the better:

Which *thou* so freely impartest to *thine* Elect, that they may truly acknowledge, and evidently experience that they have nothing of themselves; and whatsoever *grace* & good they have, it is from *Thee*.

For, of themselves they are cold, dull, and indevout; but by *thee* they are made fervent, agil, and devout.

For, Who is he that, approaching humbly to the fountain of sweet-

ness, that doth not carry away some little sweetness?

And who, standing by a great fire, receives not some heat thereby?

And *thou* art a fountain always overflowing, and a fire ever burning, and never decaying.

4. WHEREFORE, if I may not draw at the full out of this fountain, or drink my fill, I will notwithstanding set my Lips to the Mouth of this heavenly Conduit; that I may draw from thence some small drop to refresh my thirst, to the end I wither not wholly.

And, though I cannot be yet so heavenly, and inflamed, as a Cherubin or Seraphin, yet I will endeavour to apply my self to devotion, and dispose my self to obtain some small spark of divine fire, through the humble receiving of this *life-giving Sacrament*. And

And what-ever is wanting to me
(Good JESU, most holy *Saviour*)
do *thou* supply for me mercifully,
and graciously, who hast vouchsafed
to call all unto *thee*, saying; *Come*
unto me all ye that labour and are
burthened, and I will refresh you.
Mat. II.

5. I TRULY labour in the sweat
of my brows, and am vexed with
grief of heart; I am burthened with
sins, and troubled with temptations;
I am intangled, and oppressed, with
many evil passions; and there is none
to help me, none to deliver and save
me; but *thou*, my *Lord God*, my
Saviour, to whom I commit my self
and all mine, that thou mayst keep
me, and bring me to life everlasting.
Receive me to the honour, and
glory of *thy name*, who hast pre-
pared thy *Body*, and Blood, to be
my Meat and Drink.

Grant, *Lord God my Saviour*, that, through frequenting thy *Mystery*, my devotion, and affection to my salvation, may increase.

CHAP. V.

Of the dignity of the Sacrament, and Priestly function.

The Voyce of the Beloved.

1. **I**F thou hadst Angelical *purity*, and the sanctity of Saint *John* the Baptist; thou wert not worthy to receive, or handle, this *Sacrament*. *Matt. 18.*

For it is not within the compass of the deserts of man, that man should consecrate, and handle the *Sacrament of Christ*, to the end to receive, for food, the bread of Angels.

A

A great Myſtery; and great is the Dignity of *Prieſts*, To whom is granted that which is not permitted to Angels!

For, *Prieſts* only, rightly ordered, in the Church, have power to celebrate, and conſecrate the *Body of Chriſt*.

The *Prieſt* is truly the *Minifter of God*, uſing the words of *God*, by the commandement, and institution of *God*.

But *God* is, there, the principal author, and inviſible worker; to *whom* is ſubject all that *he* pleaſeth, and all that *he* commandeth doth obey.

2. THOU ought'ſt therefore to give more credit to *God Almighty* in this moſt excellent Sacrament, than to thine own ſenſe, or any viſible ſigne.

And therefore thou art to come to this Myſtery with fear, and reverence.

Consider then attentively, and behold what the Ministry is, which is delivered unto thee by the laying on thee, the hands of a *Bishop*. *1 Tim. 2.*

Lo; thou art made a *Priest*, and consecrated to say *Mass*, see now that faithfully and devoutly, in due time, thou offer sacrifice unto *God*; and carry thy self so, as thou mayst be without reproof.

Thou hast not lightened thy burthen, but art now bound in a stricter band of discipline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of sanctity.

A *Priest* ought to be adorned with all kind of virtue, and to give example of good life to others.

His conversation should not be according to the popular and common way of men, but with the Angels in heaven, and perfect men on earth.

3. A *PRIEST*, arrayed in sacred vestments, is the Vice-gerent of *Christ*; humbly and with a prostrate mind, to pray unto *God* for himself and all the people.

He hath before and behind the signe of the *Cross* of our *Lord*, to the end he may remember the *Passion* of *Christ*.

He bears the *Cross* before him in the vestment, that he may diligently behold the footsteps of *Christ*, and fervently endeavour to follow them.

He is marked with the *Cross* behind, that he may patiently suffer for *God*, whatsoever adversities shall be laid on him by others.

He bears the *Cross* before him, that he may lament his own sins; and the same behind, that he may with a compassionate heart bewail the offences of others, and know

that he is placed as a Mediator betwixt *God*, and Sinner.

Neither ought he to cease from prayer, and holy oblation, till he deserve to obtain *grace* and *mercy*.

When a *Priest* doth celebrate, he honoureth God, rejoyceth the Angels, edifieth the Church, helps the living, gives rest to the dead, and makes himself partaker of good works.

CHAP. VI.

An Interrogation of the exercise before Communion.

The Voyce of the Disciple.

I. **W**HEN I weigh *thy* greatness, ô Lord, and my unworthiness; I tremble very much, and am confounded in my self.

For,

For, If I come not to *thee*, I fly from life; and, if I intrude myself unworthily, I incurr *thy* displeasure.

What therefore shall I do, my *God*, my Helper, my Counsellor in necessities?

2. Do *thou* teach me the right way; appoint me some exercise suitable to this sacred Communion.

For it is profitable for me to know how I should reverently, and devoutly prepare my heart unto *thee*; for, the healthful receiving thy *Sacrament*, or, for celebrating so great, and divine a *Sacrifice*.

CHAP. VII.

Of the discussion of our own conscience, and purpose of amendment.

The Voice of the Beloved.

ABOVE all things, the *Priest* of *God* ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receive this *Sacrament* with great *humility* of heart, and lowly reverence; with a full *faith*, and pious intention, to the honour of *God*.

Examine diligently thy conscience, and, to thy power, purge, and cleanse it with *true contrition*, and humble confession.

So as there may be nothing in thee that thou canst discern, which may breed remorse or hinder thy free access.

Repent thee of all thy sins in general,

neral; and, in particular, bewail, and grieve for thy daily offences.

And, if thou hast time, confess to *God*, in the secret of thy heart, all the miseries of thy passions.

2. LAMENT, and grieve, that thou art yet so carnal, and worldly; so immortified in thy passions; so full of the motions of concupiscence.

So ill governed in thy exterior senses!

So often intangled with vain phantasies:

So much inclined to exteriour things, so negligent in thy *interior*; so prone to laughter, and dissoluti-on, so hard to tears and compuncti-on:

So prone to ease, and pleasures of the flesh; so dull to austerity, and fervour; so curious to hear news, and see fine sights;

So

So slack to embrace that which
tends to thy humiliation, and con-
tempt:

So covetous of abundance:

So niggardly in giving:

So fast in keeping:

So inconsiderate in speech:

So unable to keep silence:

So incompoted in manners!

So importune in actions:

So greedy to meat:

So deaf to the word of *God*:

So hasty to rest, so slow to la-
bour:

So watchful to tales:

So drowsy to watch in the service
of *God*:

So hasty to make an end:

So wandering in attention:

So negligent in saying the offices:

So tepid in saying the Mass:

So dry in receiving:

So quickly distracted:

So seldom well recollected;

So

Of the Imitation of Christ. 421

So suddenly moved to anger:

So apt to take displeasures against
another :

So prone to judg :

So severe to reprehend :

So joyful in prosperity, so weak
in adversity :

So often proposing much good,
and performing little.

3. THESE, and other thy defects, confessed and bewailed with sorrow, and great dislike of thine own infirmity ; make a firm purpose to amend thy life, and profit more.

Then, with full resignation, and with thy whole will, offer thy self up to the honour of *my* name, a perpetual sacrifice on the Altar of thy heart ; faithfully committing thy soul, and body unto *me*.

That thou mayst so deserve worthily to come to offer sacrifice unto *God*, & receive, availably to thy salvation,

vation, the Sacrament of *my Body*.

4. FOR, there is no oblation more worthy, nor satisfaction greater for the washing away of sins, than to offer up ones self *purely* unto God, and wholly, with the oblation of the *Body of Christ* in the Mass, and in Communion.

If a man shall do what lyeth in him, and be truly penitent, as often as he shall come unto me for grace and pardon; *I live* (saith our Lord) *who will not the death of sinner, but rather that he may be converted and live: for, I will not remember his sins any more, but all shall be forgiven him, Ezek. 18.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of the Oblation of Christ on the Cross,
and resignation of our Selves.*

The Voice of the Beloved.

I. **A**S I willingly offered my self
to God, my Father with my
hands stretched out on the Cross, and
my Body naked for thy sins; so as no-
thing remained in me, that was not
turned into a sacrifice for the appea-
sing the divine wrath. Esay. 51.
Heb, 9:

Even so, must thou offer thy
self willingly unto Me, in a pure, and
holy oblation dayly in the Mass,
with all thy strength, and affecti-
ons, as heartily as thou art able.

What do I more require of thee,
than that thou endeavour to resigne
thy self wholly to me!

I respect not whatever thou givest, besides thy self; for, *I* seek not thy gift, but *Thee*. *Prov.* 23.

2.. AS it would not suffice thee, if thou hadst all but *me*; so it cannot please *me*, give what thou wilt besides thy self.

Offer thy self to *me*, and give thy self wholly to *God*, and thy offering will be accepted.

Behold, *I* offered my self wholly to *my Father* for thee, and gave my whole *Body*, and *Blood* for thy food; that *I* might be wholly thine, and thou remain mine.

But if thou abid'st in thy self, and dost not offer thy self freely to *my* will, thy oblation is not intire, neither shall the union betwixt us be perfect.

A free offering of thy self, therefore, into the hands of *God*, must go before all thy actions, if thou wilt.

wilt obtain freedom, and grace.

And, for this reason, few are illuminated and made *interiourly* free, because they do not resolve to deny themselves wholly.

My saying is undoubtedly true;
“ Unless one forsake all, he cannot be my Disciple. Luc. 14.

If therefore thou wishest to be my Disciple, offer up thy self to me, with all thy desires.

CHAP. IX.

That we must offer our Selves and all that is ours to God; and pray for all.

The Voice of the Disciple.

I. **T**HINE, O Lord, are all things that are in heaven, and in earth. Psal. 23.

I

I desire to offer my self unto *thee* as a free oblation, and to remain always *thine*.

In *simplicity* of heart, ô Lord, I offer my self unto *thee* this day to be *thy* servant for ever; to serve thee, and in a sacrifice of perpetual praise.

Receive me with this holy Oblation of thy precious Body, which in the presence of invisible Angels attending, I offer unto thee this day, that it may be for mine and all the peoples salvation.

2. I OFFER unto *thee*, ô Lord, all my sins, and offences, which I have committed in the sight of *thee*, and thy holy Angels, from the day wherein I could first sin, to this day, upon thy Altar of reconciliation; that *thou* mayst consume, and burn them all with the fire of *thy* charity; and wash out all the stains of my
sins,

fin's, and cleanse my conscience from all offences, and restore unto me *thy* grace which through sin I lost, forgiving me all fully, and receiving me mercifully in the kiss of peace.

3. WHAT can I do for my sin's, but humbly confess, and bewail them, and beg always for mercy? I beseech thee, hear me in thine abundant mercy, where I stand before thee, my *God!*

All my sin's most highly displease me; I will never commit them again, but am sorry, and will be sorry for them as long as I live, and am ready to do penance, and satisfy for them to the utmost of my power.

Forgive me, *ô God*, forgive me my sin's, for thy holy name sake; save my soul, which thou hast redeemed with thy most precious Blood.

Behold, I commit my self to *thy* mercy,

mercy, I resigne my self into *thine* hands; do with me, according to *thy* goodness, not according to my malice, and iniquity.

4. I OFFER unto *thee*, all my good works, though they be very few and imperfect; that *thou* mayst amend and sanctify them, that *thou* mayst make them grateful, and acceptable to *thee*; and mayst always perfect them more, and more; and likewise bring me, slothful and unprofitable creature, to a blessed, and happy end.

5. I OFFER unto *thee* also the holy Vows of devout persons; the necessities of my parents, friends, brethren, sisters, and all those who are dear unto me, and that have done good either to my self or others, for *thy* love; and begged, and desired me to say *Mass*, and
pray

pray for them, and all theirs; whether they be yet alive, or already dead, that they may all receive the help of *thy* grace, and benefit of comfort, protection from dangers, delivery from pains; that, freed from all evils, they may joyfully, give worthy thanks to *thee*.

6. I OFFER up also unto *thee*, my prayers, and sacrifice of reconciliation, for them especially who have in any thing wronged, grieved, or slandered me, or have done me any damage, or displeasure.

And for all those whom I have, at any time, grieved, troubled, or scandalized, by works, or deeds, knowingly or ignorantly; that it may please thee to forgive us all our sins, and mutual offences.

Take away, *ô Lord*, from our hearts all jealousy, indignation, wrath and contention, and whatsoever
may

may hurt charity, and weaken brotherly love.

Have mercy, *ô Lord*, have mercy on those who crave mercy; give grace to them that stand in need thereof; and grant that we may be such as we may be worthy to enjoy thy grace and attain to *life everlasting*.

CHAP. X.

That the holy Communion is not lightly to be forborn.

The Voyce of the Beloved.

I. **T**HOU oughtst to have recourse often to the fountain of *grace*, and divine mercy; to the fountain of *goodness* and all *purity*; that thou mayst be cured of thy sins, and passions, and deserve to be made more strong and vigilant against

gainst the deceits, and temptations of the Devil.

The Enemy, knowing the greatest profit, and remedy, to consist in the holy *communion*; endeavours by all means, and occasions that possibly he can, to withdraw and hinder faithful, and devout persons from it.

2. FOR, some, when they dispose themselves to the *sacred Communion*, suffer great assaults of the devil.

For, that wicked Spirit, as it is written (in *Job. i.*) commeth among the sons of *God*, to trouble them with his accustomed malice, or to make them over-fearful, and perplexed, that so he may diminish their affection; or, by resisting them, take away their faith to the end they may altogether abstain from this *Communion*, or, at least, frequent it with less devotion. But,

But, there is no heed to be taken to his frauds, and fancies, though they are never so foul and horrid; but all his fancies are to be returned back on his own head.

He is (miserable wretch) to be contemned and scorned; and the *sacred communion* is not to be omitted, for the commotions and assaults which he raiseth.

3. OFTENTIMES, much sollicitude to obtain devotion, and a certain anxiety to make our confession, hinders us.

Do according to the counsel of the prudent man, and put away all anxiety, and scruple; for it hindreth the *grace of God*, and destroys devotion of mind.

Leave not the Communion for a small disquiet or vexation, but go confess sooner, and willingly forgive others what offences soever they have

have committed against thee; and, if thou hast offended any, humbly beg pardon, and *God* will willingly forgive thee.

4. WHAT avails it, to delay Confession a long time, or to deferr the holy *Communion*? Purge thy self with speed, spit out the venom presently, make haste to take a remedy, and thou shalt find it better than if thou didst long time deferre it.

If thou omit to day for this cause, to morrow perhaps a greater will fall out; and so thou mayst be hindered a long time from *Communion*, and become more unfit.

Stir up thy self, and shake off all heaviness and sloth with the greatest force, and speed thou canst; for, it profits nothing, to continue long in unquietness and trouble of mind, and to withdraw thy self from the

X

Sacra-

Sacraments, for daily imperfections.

Yea it very much endamages, to deferre Communion long ; for, it is wont to breed a grievous dulness.

Alas ! some cold and dissolute people do willingly delay their Confession ; and do therefore desire to deferre the *sacred Communion*, lest they should be bound to a greater watch over themselves.

5. ALAS ! How little is their love, and how weak their devotion, who so easily put-by the *sacred Communion* !

How happy is he, and grateful to God, who so ordereth his life, and keeps his conscience in such *purity* ; that he may be ready, and affected to Communicate every day, if it were lawful for him, and it might be done without note ?

If sometimes any abstain, for *humility*-sake, or by reason of some
lawful

lawful impediment, he is to be commended for his reverence.

But, if sloath be the cause, he must stirr himself up, and do what lyeth in him, and *God* will further his desire for his good will, which *God* doth chiefly regard.

6. AND, when he is lawfully hindered, he shall always have a good will and pious inclination to communicate, and thereby he shall not want the fruit of the Sacrament.

For, any devout person may every day and hour profitably, and without lett, receive *Christ* *spiritually*.

And yet, on certain days, and at the time appointed, he ought to receive Sacramentally (with affection and reverence) the *Body of Christ* his Redeemer, and rather seek the honour and glory of *God*, than his own comfort.

X 2

For,

For, he communicates mystically, and is invisibly fed as often as he devoutly calls to mind the mystery of the *Incarnation*, and *Passion of Christ*, and is inflamed with *his love*.

7. HE that prepares not himself, but when a Feast draws near, or when Custom compels him, shall be often unprepared.

Blessed is he who offers himself up as an *Holocaust* to our Lord, as often as he doth celebrate or communicate.

Be not too long, or too short in saying *Mass*; but observe the good common manner of those with whom thou livest.

Thou oughtest not to be tedious, or troublesome to others, but keep the common course according to the institution of Superiours; and rather frame thy self to the profit
of

of others, than to thine own private devotion, or affection.

C H A P. X I.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scripture, are most necessary to a faithful soul.

The Voice of the Disciple

I. **O** MOST sweet Lord JESUS; how great is the delight of a devout soul, that feasts with thee in thy Banquet, where there is no other meat offered to be eaten, but thy Self, her only Beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart.

And truly, it would be delightful to me to pour out tears with an intimate affection in thy presence, and, with devout Magdalene, to wash thy feet with tears. *Luk. 7.*

But where is this devotion, where is so plentiful shedding of tears?

Certainly, in the sight of *thee* and *thy* holy Angels, my whole heart should be inflamed, and dissolve into tears for joy; since I enjoy *thee* in the Sacrament, *truly* present, though hidden under another form.

2. FOR, To behold *thee in thine own divine brightness*, mine eyes would not be able to endure it, neither could the whole world subsist in the *clear glory of thy Majesty*.

In this therefore thou providest for my weakness; that *thou hidest thy self* under the Sacrament.

I *truly* have, and adore, him whom the Angels adore in heaven; but I, for the present time, in *faith*; they, in *his* proper form without shadow.

I must be content with the light
of

of *true faith*, and walk therein till the day of everlasting brightness break, and the shadows of figure pass away.

But, when that shall come that is perfect, the use of Sacraments shall cease. 2 Cor. 13.

For, the Blessed in the heavenly glory need not the remedy of Sacraments; but rejoyce without end in the presence of *God*, beholding his glory face-to-face; and, being transformed, through the light of glory, into the light of the *Abyssal Deity*, they tast the *Word of God made flesh*, as he was from the beginning, and as he remains for ever.

3. MINDFUL of these wonderful things, even all *spiritual* comfort becoms tedious unto me; for, as long as I behold not my *Lord* openly in *his* glory, I make no account

X 4

of

of whatsoever I hear, or see in this life.

Thou art my witness, O God, that nothing can comfort me, nor any creature give me rest; but *thou*, my God, whom I desire eternally to contemplate.

But this is not possible, while I remain in this mortal life.

I must therefore frame my self to much patience, and submit my self to *thee*, in all my desires.

For, thy Saints also, who now rejoyce with *thee*, O Lord, in the Kingdom of heaven, whilst they lived, expected in faith, and great patience, the Coming of *thy* Glory.

What they believed, I believe; what they hoped for, I hope for; to the place they are already arrived, I trust I shall arrive through *thy* grace.

In the mean time, I will go forward.

X 4

ward

ward in *faith*, strengthened by the example of thy Saints.

I have moreover holy books for my comfort, and guide of my life; and above all these *thy* most *sacred Body*, for a singular remedy and refuge.

4. Two things indeed I perceive very necessary for me in this life, without which this miserable life would be insupportable to me.

During the space of my imprisonment in this *Body*, I acknowledge my self to stand in need of two things (*viz.*) *Food*, and *Light*.

Thou hast therefore given unto me, weak creature, *thy sacred Body* for the food of my soul and body, (*Jnh. 6.*) and hast set *thy word* as a *light unto my feet*.

Without these two, I cannot well live; for, the *Word of God is the*

*light of my soul, and thy Sacrament
the bread of life.*

These may be called two Tables also, set on the one side, and the other, in the Store-house of the *Holy Church*.

One is the Table of *thy holy Altar*, containing the *sacred Bread*, that is, *the precious Body of Christ*:

The other is of *divine Law*, containing holy Doctrine, teaching the *true Faith*, and leading certainly to the part of the *Temple within the Vail, where the Holy of Holies are*.

Thanks be to *thee, O Lord JESUS*; *light of everlasting light*, for the Table of holy doctrine, at which *thou* servest us by *thy servants* the Prophets, and Apostles, and other Doctors.

5. THANKS be to *thee, Creator*, and *Redeemer* of man, who to manifest *thy love* to the whole world,
hast

hast prepared a great Supper, in which not the typical Lamb, but *thine own most sacred Body and Blood* is offered to be eaten; rejoicing all the *faithful* with *thy sacred Banquet*, and inebriating them with the Cup of *salvation*, in which are all heavenly delights: and the holy Angels do feast with us, but with a more happy sweetness.

6. O, how great and honourable is the office of *Priesthood*; to whom is granted, with sacred words, to consecrate the *Lord of Majesty*, with their lips to bless *him*, with their hands to hold *him*, with their own mouth to receive *him*, and to administer him to others.

O how clean ought those hands to be! how pure that mouth! how holy the body! how unspotted the heart of the Priest, into whom the Author of purity so often enters!

Nothing

Nothing but holy, no word but chaste and profitable, ought to proceed from the mouth of the *Priest*, who so often receives the *Sacrament of Christ*.

7. *SIMPLE* and chaste ought his eyes to be, which are wont to behold the *Body of Christ*.

The hands pure, and lifted up to heaven, that use to handle the Creator of heaven and earth.

Unto *Priests* it is especially said in the Law, *Be you holy, for that I your Lord God am holy*, Lev. 19, 20.

8. *LET thy grace. Almighty God*, assist us, that we who have undertaken the office of *Priesthood*, may serve thee worthily and devoutly, in all purity with a good conscience.

And, though we cannot live in so great innocency, as we ought to do;

do; grant us, notwithstanding, in due manner to bewail the sins which we have committed, and in the spirit of *humility*, and a good will, to serve *thee* hereafter, with more fervour.

CHAP. XII.

That he who is to Communicate, ought to prepare himself with great diligence, for Christ.

The Voyce of the Beloved.

I. **I** AM the *lover* of *purity*, and giver of sanctity; I seek a *pure* heart and *there* is my resting place.

Make ready a great Chamber adorn'd, and I will make with thee my Pasch with my Disciples. Mark. 14. Luke. 22.

IF

If thou wilt have *me* come unto thee, and remain with thee, purge the old leaven, and make clean the dwelling of thy heart; shutt out the whole world, and all tumults of Vices.

Sit like a Sprrow solitary on the house top, and think of thy excesses in the bitterness of thy soul.

For every lover prepares the best, and fairest room, for his *beloved*; and thereby, is known the affection of him that entertains his beloved.

2. KNOW thou notwithstanding, that the worth of no action of thine, is able to make this preparation sufficient, though thou shouldst prepare thy self a whole year together, and shouldst think of nothing else.

But, of my *mercy* and *grace* only, thou art suffered to come to my *Table*, like a beggar invited to dinner to a rich man; who hath nothing

thing else to return him for his benefits, but to humble himself and give him thanks.

Do what lies in thee, and do it diligently; not for custome, not for necessity: but, with fear, and reverence, and affection, receive the *Body of thy beloved Lord God*, who vouchsafeth to come to thee.

I am he that hath called thee, *I* have commanded it to be done; *I* will supply what is wanting in thee, Come, and Receive *me*.

3. WHEN I bestow the grace of devotion on thee, give thanks to God; not, because thou art worthy, but because *I* have had mercy on thee.

If thou have it not, but rather feelst thy self dry; continue in Prayer, sigh, and knock, and give not over till thou deserve to receive some crum, or drop, of saving grace.
Thou.

Thou hast need of *me*, not *I* of thee nor dost thou come to sanctify *me*, but *I* come to sanctify thee, and make thee better.

Thou com'st that thou mayst be sanctified by *me*, and united to *me*; that thou mayst receive new grace, and be stir'd up anew to amendment.

Do not neglect this *grace*; ever prepare thine heart with all diligence; and receive thy *beloved* into thy soul.

4. AND thou must not only prepare thy self to devotion before *Communion*, but carefully also keep thy self therein, after thou hast received the *Sacrament*.

For, a careful guard of thy self after, is no less exacted than devout preparation before; since a good guard after, is the best preparation again, for the obtaining of greater grace.

For

For one becoms very much indisposed thereby, if he be presently too much poured forth to exterior comforts.

Beware of much talk; remain in some secret place, and enjoy thy *God*; since thou hast him, whom all the world cannot take from thee.

I am He, to whom thou oughtst to give thy self wholly, that thou mayst hereafter live, not in thy self but in me without all sollicitude.

CHAP. XIII.

That a devout soul ought to desire with all her heart to be united with Christ in the Sacrament.

The Voyce of the Disciple.

I. **W**HO will grant me this, O Lord? that I may find thee

thee alone, and open my whole heart unto thee, and injoy thee as my soul desires; and that no man may now look upon me, or any creature moove or respect me; but *Thou* alone mayst speak unto me, and I unto *Thee*, as the *beloved* is wont to speak to the *beloved*, and a friend to banquet with his friend.

This I pray for, this I desire, That I may be wholly united to *thee*, and may withdraw my heart from all created things, and more and more, by sacred communion, and often celebrating, learn to taste of heavenly, and everlasting things.

Ah my *God*! When shall I be wholly united and absorpt by *thee*, and altogether forgetful of my Self?

Thou in me, and I in *thee*; and so grant us both to continue in one!

2. *THOU* art truly my beloved, chosen among *ſt* thousands; in Whom my
soul

Of the Imitation of Christ. 451

Soul hath taken pleasure to dwell all the days of her life. Cant. 5.

Thou art truly my Pacifier, in whom is the greatest peace and true rest; without whom, is labour, and sorrow, and infinite misery.

Thou art truly a hidden God, and thy counsel is not with the wicked; for, thy conversation is with the humble, and simple. Esay. 45. Prov. 5.

O, How sweet is thy Spirit, O Lord! who to the end thou might'st shew thy sweetness towards thy children, vouchsafest to feed them with the most sweet bread which descends from heaven. Soph. 12.

There is surely no other nation so great, which hath *God* approaching unto it, as *thou, O God*, art present to all *thy* faithful; to whom, for their dayly comfort, and for the lifting up of their hearts unto heaven, *thou* givest *thy* self to be eaten,

eaten, and injoyed. *Dent. 14.*

3. FOR, What other nation is there so famous as the Christian people? or, What creature under heaven so *beloved* as a devout soul; into whom *God* enters, that *he* may feed her with *his glorious flesh*?

O ineffable grace! O admirable favour! O infinite *love*! singularly bestowed upon man!

But, What shall I give unto our Lord, in return of this grace for so high a charity! Psal. 115.

There is nothing more grateful that I am able to give, than to bestow my *Heart* intirely on my *God*, and to unite it intinely to *him*.

Then shall all my interiour rejoyce, when my soul shall be perfectly united unto God!

Then *he* will say unto me, If thou wilt be with *me*, I will be with thee.

And I will answer *Him*, *Vouchsafe,*

O Lord, to remain with me, and I will willingly be with thee.

This is my whole desire, that my heart may be united to *thee*.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the fervent desire of some devout persons to the Body of Christ.

The Voyce of the Disciple.

I. **O** How great is the store of thy sweetness, O Lord; which thou hast hidden for those who fear thee! Psal. 50.

When I remember some devout persons, who come unto thy *Sacrament*, O Lord, with very great devotion, and affection; I am then often confounded with my self, and blush because I come so tepidly, and coldly, to thy *Altar*, and to thy *Table of holy Communion*.

Because

Because I remain so dry and without affection of heart, that I am not wholly inflamed in the presence of thee my *God* : nor so earnestly drawn, and moved, as many devout persons have been ; who, out of vehement desire of *Communion*, and a feeling *love* of heart, could not withhold themselves from weeping ; but with desire both of soul and body, they even from the very bottom of the heart longed after thee, O *God*, the living fountain ; being not otherwise able to temper or satiate their hunger, but by receiving thy Body with all joy and spiritual greediness.

2. O *true ardent Faith* of theirs, being a probable argument of thy sacred Presence!

For, those truly know their own Lord in the breaking of bread, whose hearts so vehemently burn within them

them whilst JESUS walks with them. Luk. 24.

Such desire and devotion, such vehement love, is oftentimes far from me.

Be propitious unto me (*good, sweet, and benign JESU*) and grant thy poor beggar may, at least sometimes, feel, in the sacred *Communion*, a little cordial desire of *thy love*, that my *faith* may be more strengthened, *hope in thy goodness* increased, and *charity* once perfectly inflamed; and, tasting heavenly *Manna*, may never decay.

3. *THY* mercy nevertheless is able to give me even the *grace* I desire, and to visit me in *thy* bounteous clemency with the *spirit* of fervour when it shall please *thee*.

For though I burn not with so great a desire as those who are so specially devoted to *thee*; yet not-with-

withstanding, through *thy* grace, I desire to have this great inflamed Desire; praying, and craving that I may participate with all such *thy* fervent *lovers*, and be numbred amongst them in their holy company.

CHAP. XV.

That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility, and denial of our selves.

The Voice of the Beloved.

I. **T**HOU oughtst to seek the *grace* of devotion instantly, to ask it earnestly, to expect it patiently, and confidently; to receive it thankfully, to keep it humbly, to work with it dilligently; and to permit the time, and manner, of the supernatural visitation to God till he please to come.

Thou

Thou oughtst chiefly to humble thy self, when thou feel'st little, or no devotion; and yet not be dejected, or grieve inordinately for it.

For, *God* gives often in a short time, that which he hath long time denied; *he* gives sometimes in the end, that which in the beginning of prayer *he* deferred to grant.

2. IF *grace* should always be presently given, and at hand ever with a wish, it could not well be induced by a weak man.

The *Grace* therefore of devotion is to be expected with good hope, and humble patience.

Yet impute to thy self and thy sins, what is not given thee; or, when it is secretly taken from thee.

It is a small matter, that sometimes hinders, and hides *grace* from us; if it be to be called small, and

Y not

not rather a great matter, that hindereth so great a good.

And, if thou remove this, be it great, or little, and perfectly overcome it, thou shalt have thy desire.

3. FOR, as soon as thou givest thy self with all thy heart to *God*, and seekest not this, or that, for thine own pleasure and will, but intirely settest thy self in *him*; thou shalt find thy self united, and quiet: for nothing will taste so well, and please thee so much, as the *good pleasure of the Divine Will*.

Whosoever therefore with a *simple heart*, directs his intentions to *God*, and purgeth himself from all inordinate love or dislike of any creature, shall be most fit to receive *grace*, and worthy of the gift of devotion.

For, Our *Lord* bestows his blessings there, where he finds empty vessels:

vessels : and how much more perfectly one renounceth base things ; and dies more to himself through contempt of himself, so much more speedily *grace* comes, and enters more plentifully, and elevates higher a free heart.

4. THEN *shall he see, abound, and wonder, and his heart shall be dilated in him, because the hand of our Lord is with him, and he hath put himself into his hands for ever.*

Behold ! So shall the man be blessed, who seeks *God* with his whole heart, and takes not his soul in vain.

This man deserves great *grace* of *divine union* in receiving the holy *Eucharist*, since he regards not his own devotion, and comfort ; but the honour and glory of *God*.

CHAP. XVI.

That we ought to manifest our necessities to Christ, and crave his grace.

The Voice of the Disciple.

I. **O** MOST *sweet and loving Lord*, whom now I desire to receive devoutly, *Thou* knowst my infirmity and necessity which I suffer ; with how great evils and sins I am oppressed, how often I am grieved, tempted, troubled, and defiled !

I come unto *thee* for remedy, I crave of thee comfort and ease.

I speak to him that knows all things, to whom all my interiour is manifest, and who can only perfectly comfort, and help me.

Thou knowst what they are above all things I stand in need so, & how poor I am in virtues.

2. BEHOLD,

2. BEHOLD, I stand before *thee*, poor, and naked; calling for *grace*, and craving mercy.

Refresh thy hungry beggar; give heat to my coldness, with the fire of *thy love*; give *light* to my blindness, with the brightness of *thy* presence.

Turn all earthly things unto me into bitterness; all things grievous, and contrary, into patience; all base and created things, into contempt and oblivion.

Lift up my heart to *thee* into heaven, and suffer it not to wander upon earth.

Be *thou* only sweet and delightful to me, from henceforth for evermore.

For *thou* only art my meat, and my drink; my love, and my joy; my delight, and all my good.

3. O, that with thy presence *thou*
Y 3 wouldst

wouldst wholly inflame, burn, and change me into *thee*, that I might be made one *spirit* with *thee* through the *grace* of intern union, and the melting of burning love. 2 Cor. 6.

Suffer me not to go from *thee* hungry and dry; but deal mercifully with me, as *thou* hast often dealt mercifully with thy Saints.

What marvail if I should be wholly inflamed by *thee*, and die to my self? since thou art *fire*, alwayes burning, and never decaying; *love*, purifying the heart, and inlightning the understanding.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the fervent love, and vehement affection to receive Christ.

The Voice of the Disciple.

I. **W**ITH great devotion, and burning love; with all fervour of affection of heart, I desire
to

to receive *thee*, O Lord : as many Saints, and devout persons have desired in receiving *thee*, who were most pleasing to *thee* through holiness of life, and ardent devotion.

O my God, my everlasting love, my wholegood, my happiness without end ; I would gladly receive *thee* with the most vehement desire, and worthy reverence, that any of the Saints ever had, or could feel.

2. AND, though I am unworthy to have all those feelings of devotion ; yet I offer unto *thee* the whole affection of my *heart*, as if I alone had all those most gratefully inflamed desires.

Yea whatsoever also a most devout mind can conceive, and desire ; all that, with most high reverence, and *inward affection*, I present, and offer unto thee.

I desire to reserve nothing to my
Y 4 self,

self, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice my self, and all mine, unto thee.

My Lord God, my Creator, and my Redeemer; I desire to receive thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise, and honour; with such gratitude, worthiness, and love; with such faith, hope, and purity; as thy most blessed Mother, the most glorious Virgin Mary received and desired thee, when she humbly, and devoutly answered the Angel, who declared to her the mystery of thy Incarnation, saying, Behold the Handmaid of our Lord; let it be done unto me according to thy word. Luk. 1.

3. AND, as thy blessed Fore-runner, the most excellent among the Saints, John the Baptist, leaped cheerfully with joy of the Holy Ghost, whilst he was yet shut up in his

his mother's womb, and afterwards seeing JESUS walking among men, humbling himself very much, said with devout affection :

As the friend of the Bridegroom that stands, and hears him, rejoiceth with joy for the voice of the Bridegroom, Joh. 3. 2.

So I wish also to be inflamed with holy desires, and to offer my self up to *thee* with my whole heart.

And therefore I offer, and present unto *thee* the jubilations, ardent affections, mental excesses, supernatural illuminations, and heavenly visions of all devout hearts, with all the virtue and praises celebrated, and to be celebrated, by all creatures in heaven, and earth; for my self and all such as are commended to my prayers, that by all thou mayst be worthily praised, and glorified for ever.

4. RECEIVE my vows, O *my Lord God*, and desires of infinite praise and immense benediction, which are due to *thee*; according to the measure of thy unspeakable greatness.

These I yield, and desire to yield to *thee*, every day and moment; and do intreat, and invite all the heavenly *spirits*, and all thy faithful, with prayers and affections, to give thee thanks and praises together with me.

5. LET all People, Tribes, and Tongues praise thee, and with high jubilation and ardent devotion magnify thy holy and mellifluous Name.

And let all who reverently, and devoutly celebrate thy most high Sacrament, and receive it with full faith, deserve to find grace, and mercy at thy hands, and pray humbly for me sinful creature.

And

And when they shall have obtained their desired devotion, and joyful union, and shall depart from my sacred heavenly table well comforted, and marvelously refreshed; let them vouchsafe to remember my poor and needy soul.

CHAP. XVIII.

That a man be not a curious searcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Christ, submitting his Sense unto Faith.

The Voyce of the Beloved.

I. **T**HOU ough't to beware of curious, and unprofitable searching into this most profound *Sacrament*, if thou wilt not sink into the depth of doubt.

He that is a searcher of Majesty shall be oppressed by glory.

God

God is able to work more, than man can understand.

A pious, and humble inquiry of *truth* is tolerable, so he be always ready to be taught, and endeavour to walk in the sound paths of the Ancient Fathers doctrine?

2. BLESSED is that simplicity, that forsakes the difficult way of questions, and goes on in the plain, and assured path of *God's* commandments.

Many have lost devotion by searching after high things.

Faith, and sincere Life, are exalted at *thy* hands; not, height of understanding; nor the depth of the Mysteries of *God*.

If thou dost not understand nor conceive the things that are under thee, How shalt thou be able to comprehend things that are above thee?

Submit.

Submit thy self to *God*, and let thy sense be subject to *faith*, and the light of knowledg shall be given thee in that degree, as shall be profitable and necessary for thee.

3. SOME are grievously tempted about Faith, and the *Sacrament*; but, that is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the Enemy.

Do not regard, or dispute with thy thoughts, nor answer the doubts moved by the Devil; but believe the words of *God*, believe his Saints and Prophets, and the wicked Enemy will fly from thee.

It is oftentimes very profitable to the servants of *God*, to suffer such things; for, he tempts not infidels, & sinners, whom he already securely possesseth, but he sundry ways tempts, and vexeth the faithful and devout.

4. Go forward therefore with a sincere, and undoubted faith; and come to the Sacrament with humble Reverence.

And whatsoever thou art not able to understand, commit securely to Almighty God.

God deceives thee not, he is deceived that trusts too much to himself.

God walks with the *simple*, reveals himself to the humble, gives understanding to little-ones, opens the sense to *pure* mindes, and hides *grace* from the curious, and proud.

Humane reason is weak, and may be deceived; but, true faith cannot be deceived.

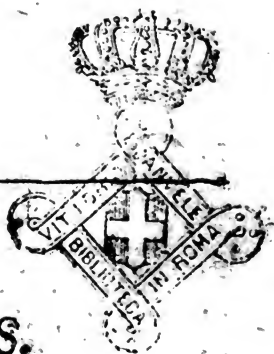
All reason, and natural search, ought to follow *faith*, not go before it, or impugn it.

For, *Faith* and *Love* do chiefly excel, and work in a hidden manner in this most blessed, and sweet Sacrament.

God

God, who is everlasting, and of infinite power, doth great, and insearchable things, in heaven and earth; and there is no searching his wonderful works.

If the works of *God*, were such as might be easily comprehended by human reason; they were not to be called Wonderful, and unspeakable.



E I N I S.



A Table or Index of the Chapters
contained in the four Books of
the IMITATION OF CHRIST :
written by the Venerable Man
John Gersen, Abbot, of the most
Holy Order of *St. Benedict*.

A Table of the Chapters, contained in the
First Book.

1. **O**F the Imitation of Christ, and con-
tempt of all worldly vanities, Pag. 1.
2. Of the humble esteem of our selves, p. 5.
3. Of the doctrine of truth, p. 8.
4. Of Prudence in our actions, p. 14.
5. Of the reading of holy Scriptures, p. 16.
6. Of inordinate Affections, p. 18.
7. Of flying vain hope and pride p. 19.
8. That too much familiarity is to be shun-
ned, p. 22.
9. Of Obedience, and subjection, p. 23.
10. Of avoyding superfluity of words, p. 25.

THE TABLE.

11. Of obtaining peace, and zeal of profit- ing,	P.27.
12. Of the profit of Adversity,	P.32.
13. Of resisting Temptations,	P.34.
14. Of avoiding rash-Judgment,	P.40.
15. Of works, done out of Charity,	P.42.
16. Of bearing with the defects of others,	P.44.
17. Of Monastical life,	P.47.
18. Of the Examples of holy Fathers,	P.49.
19. Of the Exercises of a good religious man,	P.54.
20. Of the love of solitude, and silence,	P.61.
21. Of Compunction of heart,	P.68.
22. Of the Consideration of humane misery,	P.73.
23. Of the Meditation of Death,	P.79.
24. Of Judgment and punishment of sins,	P.87.
25. Of the fervent amendment of our whole life,	P.94.

A Table of the Chapters, contained in the
Second Book.

1. O f internal Conversation.	P.105.
2. Of humble Submission under the	

THE TABLE.

- | | |
|---|---------|
| <i>the government of a Prelate,</i> | P. 113. |
| 3. <i>Of a good peaceable man,</i> | P. 115. |
| 4. <i>Of a pure mind, and simple intention,</i> | P. 118. |
| 5. <i>Of the consideration of our Selves,</i> | P. 97. |
| 6. <i>Of the joy of a good Conscience,</i> | P. 100. |
| 7. <i>Of the love of JESUS, above all things,</i> | P. 104. |
| 8. <i>Of familiar friendship with JESUS,</i> | P. 107. |
| 9. <i>Of the want of all comfort,</i> | P. 112. |
| 20. <i>Of gratitude for the grace of God,</i> | P. 119. |
| 11. <i>Of the few lovers of the Cross of JESUS,</i> | P. 124. |
| 12. <i>Of the Royal way of the holy Cross,</i> | P. 128. |
-

A Table of the Chapters, contained in the Third Book.

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. O <i>F the internal speech of Christ to a faithful soul,</i> | P. 142. |
| 2. <i>That truth speaks interiorly without noise of words,</i> | P. 145. |
| 3. <i>That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not,</i> | P. 148. |

THE TABLE.

4. *That we ought to live in truth, and humility in the sight of God.* p. 154.
5. *Of the wonderful effect of Divine Love,* p. 158.
6. *Of the proof of true Love.* p. 164.
7. *That Grace is to be hid under the veil of Humility,* p. 169.
8. *Of a mean esteem of ones-self in the sight of God,* p. 175.
9. *That all things are to be referred to God, as to the last end.* p. 178.
10. *That, despising the world, it is sweet to serve God,* p. 181.
11. *That the desires of our heart are to be examined, and moderated,* p. 186.
12. *Of the effect of patience, and strife against concupiscence,* p. 188.
13. *Of the obedience of an humble subject, according to the example of JESUS CHRIST,* p. 193.
14. *Of the secret judgments of God to be considered, lest we be extolled in our good deeds,* p. 196.
15. *What we ought to do, and say, in every thing we desire,* p. 200.
16. *That true comfort is to be sought in God alone,* p. 204.
17. *That we ought to cast all our care up-
on*

THE TABLE.

- on God, P.206.
18. That temporal miseries, by the example
of Christ, are to be born patiently, p.209.
19. Of suffering Injuries; and, Who is pro-
ved to be truly Patient. 212
20. Of the confession of our infirmity, & the
miseries of this life. 216
21. That we are to rest in God above all
goods, and gifts. 220
22. Of the remembrance of the manifold
benefits of God, P.226.
23. Of Four things that bring much peace
P.231.
24. Of flying curious inquiry of the lives
of others, P.236.
25. Wherein the firm peace of the heart,
and true profit doth consist, P.238.
26. Of the excellency of a free Mind, which
humble prayer better deserves than reading,
P.241.
27. That private love most hinders from the
chiefest Good, P.244.
28. Against the tongue of slanderers. P.249.
29. How we ought to call upon God, and
bless him, when tribulation draws neer,
P.250.
30. Of craving the divine aid, and confi-
denoe of recovering grace, P.252.
- 31.

THE TABLE.

31. Of the contempt of all creatures to find
our Creator, p.258.
32. Of the denyal of our selves, and forsaking
of all our affections, p.263
33. Of inconstancy of heart, and directing
our final intentions to God, p.266.
34. That God is sweet above all things, and
in all things, to him that loves, p.269.
35. That there is no security from tempta-
tion in this life, p.276.
36. Against the vain judgment of men.
273.
37. Of a full, and pure resignation of our
selves for the obtaining freedom of heart,
p.279.
38. Of good government in outward things,
and of recourse to God in dangers, p.282.
39. That a man be not over-earnest in his
affairs, q.285.
40. That man hath no good of himself nor
any thing whereof he can glory, p.287.
41. Of the contempt of all temporal honours,
p.291.
42. That our peace is not to be placed in men,
p.293.
43. Against vain, and secular knowledg,
p.295.
44. Of not drawing outward things to our
selves

THE TABLE.

- selves, P.299.
 45. That credit is not to be given to all men:
 and how prone man is to offend in words, P.301.
 46. Of putting our trust in God, when evil
 words arise, P.307.
 47. That all grievous things are to be born,
 for life everlasting, P.312.
 48. Of the everlasting day, and shortness of
 this life, P.315.
 49. Of the desire of eternal life, and how
 great things are promised to them that fight
 P.322.
 50. How a desolate person ought to offer
 himself into the hands of God, P.329.
 51. That we ought to insist in lowly works,
 when we are not able for high things,
 P.337.
 52. That man must not esteem himself worthy
 of comfort, but worthy of stripes. P.339.
 53. That the grace of God is not given to
 those who savour of earthly things, P.343.
 54. Of different motions of Nature and grace,
 P.346.
 55. Of the corruption of Nature, and effica-
 cy of divine Grace, P.354.
 56. That we ought to deny our selves, and
 imitate Christ by the Cross, P.360.
 57.

THE TABLE.

57. That man be not too much dejected,
when he falls into defects, P.364.
58. Of not searching into high matters, and
the secret judgments of God, P.368.
59. That all hope, and trust is to be fixed in
God alone. P.377.
-

A Table of the Chapters, contained in the Fourth Book.

1. **W**ith how great reverence, Christ is
to be received, P.383.
 2. That the great goodness and charity of
God, is bestowed on man, in this Sacra-
ment, P.395.
 3. That it is profitable, to Communicate of-
ten, P.401.
 4. That many benefits are bestowed on them
who Communicate devoutly, P.406.
 5. Of the dignity of the Sacrament, and
Priestly function, P.412.
 6. An interrogation of the exercise before
Communion, P.416.
 7. Of the discussion of our own conscience, &
purpose of amendment, P.418.
 8. Of the oblation of Christ on the Cross, and
resignation of our selves, P.423.
- 9.

THE TABLE.

9. *That we must offer our selves, and all that is ours, to God; and pray for all,* p.425.
10. *That the holy Communion is not lightly to be forborn,* p.430.
11. *That the Body of Christ, and holy Scriptures are most necessary to a faithful soul,* p.437.
12. *That he who is to Communicate, ought to prepare himself with great diligence for Christ,* p.445.
13. *That a devout soul ought to desire with all her heart to be united with Christ in the Sacrament,* p.449.
14. *Of the fervent desire of some devout persons to the Body of Christ,* p.453.
15. *That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility, and denial of our selves,* p.456.
16. *That we ought to manifest our necessities to Christ, and crave his grace,* p.460.
17. *Of the fervent love, and vehement affection to receive Christ.* p.462.
18. *That a man be not a curious searcher of this Sacrament, but an humble follower of Christ, submitting his sense unto faith,* p.467.

FINIS.

